Aug-1924 - JAN 1925

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

XXV

(August 1924 - January 1925)



DURING THE FAST, DR. JIVARAJ MEHTA ATTENDING

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(August 1924 - January 1925)

THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
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PREFACE

This volume, covering the five months from August 16, 1924 to January 15, 1925, records Gandhiji's earnest efforts for national unity, for unity between Hindus and Muslims, between Swarajists and No-changers in the Congress and between the Congress and other political parties in the country. He attributed the internecine strife and bitterness to the frustration resulting from the suspension of the non-co-operation movement and, as the author of that movement, regarded it as his duty to cleanse the atmosphere of violence in the country. This he sought to do through penance and willing surrender to opponents. The chief events of the period, the 21-day fast in September-October, the Calcutta agreement with the Swarajist leaders followed by the All-Parties Conference in Bombay (November) and the annual session of the Congress over which he presided, all bear witness to the spirit of humility in which he strove to bring about harmony in the country.

Hindu-Muslim tension had been growing for some time and Gandhiji had, a few months earlier, analysed the causes and prescribed a cure. In August, reports were received of desecration of temples at several places and Gandhiji felt seriously concerned. His own attitude he stated categorically: "I am both an idolator and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true sense of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol-worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. . . . I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the Deity save one's own" (p. 46). He told the unknown culprits: " . . . these desecrations are cutting a deep wound in my heart" (p. 47). He believed, and stated in public, that there was some kind of an organization behind these attacks. While advising Hindus against retaliation, he spoke out strongly to the Muslims responsible for these desecrations: "Remember that Islam is being judged by your conduct. . . . Even retaliation has its limits. Hindus prize their temples above their lives. It is possible to contemplate with some degree of equanimity injury to life but not to temples. Religion is more than life" (p. 47). The climax was reached in

Kohat, in the North-West Frontier Province, where on September 9 and 10 a mass attack on Hindus forced the entire Hindu population of the town to leave their homes and flee to Rawalpindi.

In a short letter to C. F. Andrews, Gandhiji mentioned the agony and the torture which he suffered at these developments and added: "But I shall soon be at peace. I was longing to see my duty clearly. The light has come like a flash. Can a man do more than give his life?" (p. 157). He had decided to undertake a purificatory fast of 21 days. He felt that the responsibility for the riots rested on him. "Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive" (p. 200).

Even so close an associate as Mahadev Desai could not understand the aim behind the fast. Answering his doubts, Gandhiji said: "Today I find that people are non-co-operating against one another, without regard for non-violence. What is the reason? Only this, that I myself am not completely non-violent. If I were practising non-violence to perfection, I should not have seen the violence I see around me today. My fast is therefore a penance. I blame no one. I blame only myself. I have lost the power wherewith to appeal to people. Defeated and helpless, I must submit my petition in His Court" (p. 175). The fast, commenced in Mahomed Ali's house in Delhi on September 17, created the atmosphere for a Unity Conference which passed, on September 27, a resolution deploring the strife which was spreading, condemning the riots as barbarous and contrary to religion and appointing a board of arbitrators who would decide disputes between the two communities and frame a scheme for protection of the rights of minorities. The Conference also appealed to Gandhiji to break his fast. He refused to do that, saying that the fast was a matter between God and himself.

With regard to the position of the Swarajists in the Congress, the situation was as complex as it could be. The No-changers, as the orthodox party in the Congress were called, wanted the original non-co-operation programme of the Congress to be scrupulously adhered to, whereas the Swarajists had adopted the programme of obstruction from within the Councils. After the A.I.-C.C. meeting in June, a "tug of war" had developed between the two sections for control of the Congress. "I am sick," Gandhiji said, "of the domestic fight that is raging in the country" (p. 65). He was convinced that the Swarajist programme hindered the development of internal strength through the constructive pro-

gramme, but he was not inclined any longer to oppose it. Writing to C. Rajagopalachari on September 6, he said: "I see as clearly as daylight that we must not resist the evil that has crept into our ranks. We must abdicate power altogether. If we have faith in our mission, and if the mission is intrinsically good, we must succeed" (p. 98). But the rank and file of the No-changers were not convinced of the wisdom of this approach. They called it surrender. That was, however, exactly Gandhiji's intention. Explaining his position in *Young India*, he said: "All I know is that there is no fight left in me. This is much for a born fighter to say. I have fought my dearest ones. But I fight out of love. I should fight the Swarajists, too, out of love. But I must, I see, first prove my love. I thought I had proved it. I see I was wrong. I am therefore retracing my steps" (p. 125). Again, in "The Law of Love", he said: "I must prove to everyone that I am what I profess to be—their friend and servant" (p. 260). While Gandhiji was carrying on negotiations with Motilal Nehru with a view to arriving at complete understanding with the Swaraj Party, the Government resorted to severe repression in Bengal and arrested and imprisoned a number of persons without trial. This heightened the urgency of unity within the Congress so as to make it a disciplined organization which would respond to every call. Gandhiji and the Swarajist leaders, therefore, arrived at an agreement at Calcutta on November 6, whereby the Swaraj Party would be permitted to carry on their Councils programme in the name of the Congress and, in return, the Party would support the constructive programme and the introduction of daily spinning as a qualification for membership of the Congress. In order to bring the other parties on a common platform within the Congress, it was also proposed in the agreement to suspend the other boycotts which had formed part of the non-co-operation movement. Gandhiji justified this agreement thus in his speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay on November 23: "I practically confess that I consider it impossible to lead the battle of non-co-operation or of civil disobedience, unless we have by us . . . a large measure of the intellect of the country, which should range on our side in sympathy with us and even actively co-operate with us. That we cannot expect unless we yield to them in some respects" (pp. 350-1).

Gandhiji's attitude of compromise towards the Swaraj Party caused bewilderment among the No-changers. He understood their difficulty, but pleaded with them for single-minded prosecution of the constructive programme irrespective of whether or not

they held power in the Congress. Writing on September 15 to C. Rajagopalachari, the most loyal of non-co-operators, he said: "I know how difficult it must be for you and others suddenly to accommodate yourselves to these sudden changes. But how shall I help myself! I know I am putting an undue strain upon the loyalty and the faith of co-workers" (p. 149). Gandhiji reasoned with the non-co-operators thus: "We must stoop to conquer. Retaining every bit of non-co-operation in our own persons, we must make the path of those who do not believe in it smooth for serving us and helping the country in the constructive effort. . . . Is it not easy enough to see that service requires no power, no office, no prestige? I would like every one of us to be a mere servant of the nation. I would like No-changers so to behave as to be wanted by Swarajists, Liberals and all others" (pp. 259-60). With characteristic solicitude for co-workers, Gandhiji wrote to Rajaji: "Let this be as balm to your lacerated heart. . . . Bardoli was the boldest experiment in non-violence in one direction. The agreement is the boldest experiment in non-violence in another direction" (p. 324).

As envisaged in the Calcutta agreement, an All-Parties Conference was called in Bombay on November 21 and 22 to forge a common front against the Government which had embarked upon a policy of repression in Bengal with the aim primarily, it was felt, of crushing the Swaraj Party. Gandhiji had seen through the official game of weakening the forces of nationalism in the country by taking full advantage of the divisions in their ranks. At his instance, the All-Parties Conference adopted a resolution condemning the action of the Government and appointed a committee "to consider the best way of re-uniting all political parties in the Indian National Congress and to prepare a scheme of swaraj. . ." (pp. 341-2). The task was no easy one; the Liberals and the Independents had objections to joining the Congress on the ground of the creed of swaraj, since the word could be interpreted to mean complete independence, the status of the Swaraj Party and the requirement of daily spinning as qualification for membership. Gandhiji had strong convictions on all these issues, but he assured the other parties: "I shall not wilfully stand in the way of any honourable means that may be desired by the committee for bringing all the parties together. . . . Let all parties then make an honest and earnest effort to find a way out. Let them approach the deliberations of the committee with faith and determination to find a common platform. Let them approach them with an open mind" (p. 363).

Gandhiji was elected President of the Congress for the ensuing year, but it was after much prayer and heart-searching that he accepted the honour, for "a gulf seems to be yawning between educated India and myself . . . and . . . the intellect of the country seems to be ranged against my ways of thought and action. . . " (p. 356). His presidential speech was a survey of the state of the nation, the Calcutta agreement and the general questions arising from it. He also explained in it his views on the importance of the Swaraj Party, on the function of national schools after the suspension of the non-co-operation movement and on the repression in Bengal. He gave a "sketch of some of the requirements of swaraj as I would have it". He would "strive for such swaraj within the Empire, but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people" (p. 481). Gandhiji concluded the address with a firm reiteration of his faith in non-co-operation and satyagraha.

Among the letters included in the volume are some which are precious for the glimpses they give of Gandhiji's personal relations with co-workers. Writing to C. F. Andrews on August 25, he advised him: "Will you not 'rest and be thankful' for a while? Work is prayer but it can also be madness. You were in fever when you wrote your Burmese article" (p. 38). Gandhiji's letters to Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru reveal his concern for both father and son. Writing to the former on September 2, he said: "This letter like the former is meant to be a plea for Jawaharlal. He is one of the loneliest young men of my acquaintance in India. The idea of your mental desertion of him hurts me. . . . I don't want to be the cause direct or indirect of the slightest breach in that wonderful affection" (p. 65). In reply to a letter from Jawaharlal, Gandhiji said: "Father is just now in an irritable mood. And I am most anxious that neither you nor I should contribute an iota to the irritation. . . . It makes me unhappy to find him unhappy. His irritability is a sure sign of his unhappiness" (p. 148). And finally, there is the letter to Romain Rolland, where he says of Mirabehn: "What a treasure you have sent me. I shall try to be worthy of such a great confidence. I shall do everything to help Miss Slade to become a little bridge between West and East" (p. 320).

Scattered among the contents of this volume are revealing confessions of personal faith. In "My Jail Experiences", the maker of history sets down his reflections on the study of history and concludes: "That which is permanent and therefore necessary

eludes the historian of events. Truth transcends history" (p. 129). Explaining his attitude to religion and politics, he said: "For me humanitarian service, or rather service of all that lives, is religion. And I draw no distinction between such religion and politics. Indeed, I cannot conceive a life full of service without its touching politics. . . . I believe that the time is fast coming when politicians will cease to fear the religion of humanity and humanitarians will find entrance into political life indispensable for full service" (pp. 52-3). Again he reiterated his humanitarian concern: "You regard me as a Mahatma, not because of my Truth, nor for my Non-violence, but on account of my deep attachment for the poorest of the poor. Whatever happens, I can never desert the poor in their rags" (pp. 59-60). But Gandhiji's humanitarianism sprang from his devotion to God. As he declared in "Bolshevism or Discipline?", his movement was not atheistic. "It is not a denial of God. It has been undertaken in His name and is being continued with constant prayer" (p. 19). During all the crises and perplexities of public life, he looked inward for light, and was extremely unhappy when, for a time, he failed to find it. Recalling the plight of Margaret in *Faust*, he said, "I seem to have lost my Love too and feel distracted. I feel the abiding presence of my Lover and yet he seems to be away from me. For he refuses to guide me and give clear-cut injunctions. On the contrary, like Krishna, the arch mischief-maker to the Gopis, he exasperates me by appearing, disappearing and reappearing" (p. 77). And Gandhiji returned again and again to the wheel and there "found peace in refusing to find it." For ever the inner voice told him: "Be 'careful for nothing', but merely do your duty as you find it" (p. 450). Gandhiji drew "the student readers' attention to the value of doing things regularly", and described how he converted the dry drudgery of indexing into a daily exercise and an absorbing game (p. 155). Clarity and certitude came from right action. "Practice is the best speech and the best propaganda. And this everyone can do without let or hindrance from anybody else. Not to worry about others is Ormuzd's way. Ahriman leads us into the trap by taking us away from ourselves. God is not in Kaaba or in Kashi. He is within everyone of us. Therefore swaraj too is to be found by searching inward, not by vainly expecting others, even our fellow-workers, to secure it for us" (p. 451).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji, have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati or Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the August 1958 edition. References to *An Autobiography* cite only the Part and Chapter, in view of the varying pagination in different editions.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to those available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the Volume are also provided at the end.

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1. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI,
Sravana Vad 2 [August 16, 1924]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. I write this in the train on my way to Delhi. Devdas[1], Pyarelal[2], Mahadev[3] and Manzar Ali are with me. I shall return in a couple of days. Take care of your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. VASUMATI
C/O DOLATRAI KASHIRAM & CO.
[SURAT]

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 454. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

2. LETTER TO RADHA GANDHI

Saturday, Sravana Vad 2 [August 16, 1924][4]

CHI. RADHA,

I got your postcard as well as the papers sent with Kesu. I write this letter on the train. I am glad that you find the place congenial. Ahmedabad water causes constipation. Both of you sisters move about freely as much as you like. I hope to return from Delhi on Friday. Devdas, Pyarelal and Mahadev, all three, are with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. RADHA
C/O VORA SHIVLAL KARSANJI
RAJKOT CITY

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6029. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

[1] Youngest son of Gandhiji
[2] Nayyar; Gandhiji's secretary since 1920; biographer of Gandhiji
[3] Desai (1892-1942); Gandhiji's secretary for 25 years
[4] From the postmark

3. *RELIEF WORK IN MALABAR*[1]

I have to confess that the response to this appeal has been more prompt than I had expected. It has been proved not once but many times that, by God's grace, compassion does exist in the hearts of the people. Many funds have been launched for this work. People may pay their contribution to whichever fund they choose; I would only urge that pay they must. Malabar's misery is unimaginable. If a man expecting death survives, he dances with joy. He forgets hunger, thirst, heat or cold in the excitement of having survived. Our brothers and sisters in Malabar are in this predicament. Those who are dead are gone. The survivors are simply happy because they are alive. As days pass, their misery will increase, not diminish. We are humble creatures before God. We have the power to crush an ant and that makes us arrogant; whereas God has a thousand times more power to crush us like ants and He does exercise that power on occasion. This action of His is, however, not "violence", because He is omniscient and an ocean of compassion. Since we cannot pierce His mystery, we call Him the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. He, in fact, neither creates nor preserves nor destroys. We know not what law governs our birth, life and death.

Whatever it is, as long as we desire to live, it is our natural and inescapable duty to help others to live.

Readers will be glad to know that some brothers and sisters are missing a meal every day, some have given up milk or other things and they are contributing to the Fund what is thus saved. Even children have joined this work spontaneously. A handsome amount is likely to be collected in this way. A small girl had stolen three pice which too she paid to the Fund. A sister has donated her four bracelets and a chain of pure gold. Another sister has given her heavy necklace. A child has parted with his gold trinket and a sister with her silver anklets. One person has given two toe-rings. An *Antyaja*[2] girl has offered voluntarily the ornaments worn on her feet. A young man has handed over his gold cuff-links.

Rs. 6994-13-3 have been collected in cash up to date. (Please

[1] A similar appeal in regard to flood relief was made in *Young India*; *vide* Vol. XXIV, pp. 574-6.

[2] Literally "the last born", the castes traditionally regarded as untouchables

see the last page[1]). The following amounts were deposited with the Bombay branch:

A gentleman—Rs. 5; Dahyalal Harivallabh Joshi—Rs. 10; Vishveshwar Manilal—Rs. 101; a gentleman—Re. 1.

I trust that the collection will continue at the same rate at which it has started.

Clothes

Clothes are coming in large numbers. It is difficult to estimate their value. These clothes are most welcome on this occasion. When there is a cloud-burst, it is not possible to think of swadeshi and *paradeshi*[2]. Therefore I intend to accept any clothes that may be offered. I do not have the nerve to say that I will not clothe a naked man in foreign garments. If India had been overflowing with khadi by now, I would, indeed, have said this. As long as we have not acquired this power, how can we, who are ourselves loaded with garments, be fastidious while clothing the naked? I have lost sight of the distinction between co-operation and non-co-operation on this occasion of distress relief. I am prepared to serve under Government officials in the work of feeding the hungry; and I advise the non-co-operators to do the same. It does not mean that we should also attend meetings convened by the Government. We are not interested in these things. We should only perform the soldier's job. If we collect funds, we should modestly extend relief without coming in the way of the Government to quarters where the Government has not reached or does not wish to reach. If the Government wills, it can extend abundant help. The entire work is so enormous that there is enough scope for private enterprise and private charity. Private enterprise alone will not be able to meet the challenge; but whatever is left undone by Government aid can be undertaken by private relief alone. I am considering in consultation with Vallabhbhai[3] how best to utilize the funds. Much depends upon the amount of money collected.

If anyone's contribution is not acknowledged in *Navajivan*, he should write to me. The intention to acknowledge all amounts is still there. In case of very small amounts, I intend to publish only the totals. Those who wish to remain anonymous, may kindly let me know their wish.

If the donors of clothes remember the following instructions, it will be convenient to accept and forward the gifts:

[1] Of *Navajivan*, 17-8-1924

[2] Foreign

[3] Patel (1875-1950); Congress leader of Gujarat; first Deputy Prime Minister of India

1. Used clothes may be washed before they are offered.
2. Torn garments may first be stitched.
3. All clothes may be properly folded, bundled and labelled with the name of the donor and the number of garments.

We are not giving away these clothes to beggars. These, people, like ourselves, belong to clean and tidy middle-class families. I do hope that the same love, care and courtesy will be shown to them, as we do while giving something to our own brother or sister. Indeed we should show consideration and care while we give even to a beggar. It does not take much time to wash unclean clothes, stitch torn garments or to fold them all properly. It merely tests one's fellow-feeling.

STUDENTS OF MAHAVIDYALAYA

Readers are aware that students of the Mahavidyalaya have offered yarn; but, like the pupils of Shraddhanandji[1] during the South African campaign, they have also donated manual work. About 75 students put in work as labourers at the college building which is being constructed for them and they paid to this fund the wages they earned. I congratulate the students and hope that they will often undertake such manual labour which is the true way of utilizing the education acquired by them.

WHERE TO GIVE?

At Ahmedabad, the donations can be forwarded to the offices of the Provincial Committee and the *Navajivan* or to the Ashram. In Bombay, arrangements may be made with the Provincial Committee or the donations may be forwarded to the branch office of the *Navajivan* on Princess Street. Wherever money, yarn or clothes are forwarded, I would advise the donors to take a regular receipt.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 17-8-1924

4. *TEACHERS AND TRAINING IN SPINNING*

Bhai Harishankar Trivedi has written the following thought-provoking letter on this subject:[2]

There is not the least doubt in my mind that students would certainly learn to spin if teachers take an interest in and master

[1] 1856-1926; nationalist leader of Arya Samaj who was known as Mahatma Munshiram; founder of the Gurukul at Kangri near Hardwar

[2] Not translated here

spinning and its related arts. Experience shows that students' interest in a subject is sustained not by the subject-matter but by the teacher. My own experience has been that one teacher used to bore me to sleep while teaching chemistry, whereas another teacher kept me wide awake and interested in the same subject. The former, who talked and talked without clarifying the topic, was not liked while, as the other teacher elucidated the theme, one wished that his period should never end. The topic was the same as well as the students. Instruction by one, however, was absorbing and by the other insipid. The spinning-wheel holds a jar of nectar. In the Dakshinamurti Bhavan, it appears, there are teachers who can reveal this.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 17-8-1924

5. *MY NOTES*

Maulana Shaukat Ali in Kathiawar

Maulana Shaukat Ali[1] has wired from Delhi that he, along with his companions, will start on a tour of Kathiawar and reach Rajkot on the 18th. The Khilafat Committees and other societies or associations who wish to invite him should write to him in time to the Rajkot address to enable him to fix engagements. I am confident that Maulana Shaukat Ali and his companions will be welcomed by Hindus as well as Muslims everywhere during their tour of Kathiawar.

Utility of "Takli"[2]

This[3] is only one of many experiences. This is just the beginning for *takli*. It has already been reported that the *takli* can spin up to 70 yards of yarn in an hour. The spinning-wheel can of course spin much more. But it is not proper to compare the *takli* with the wheel. A *takli* can be plied if you are unoccupied even for five minutes. The Congress has exempted members from spinning during travel because the spinning-wheel cannot be plied in trains. If I had been aware of the utility of the *takli* then, the exemption during travel would not have been made. On

[1] Along with his brother, Mahomed Ali took a leading part in the Khilafat Movement.

[2] Spindle

[3] Reference is to a letter in praise of *takli*; not translated here

the whole the *takli* may be more useful than the wheel to one on a journey or otherwise busy, wanting to spin. The *takli* is an inexpensive spinning tool which can supplement if not replace the wheel. Moreover, if a *takli* is made out of a bit of tile, it would cost nothing at all.

Punishment in National Schools

A gentleman writes that I have got many resolutions passed in the teachers' conference; that the teachers assented to all those resolutions half-heartedly in order to humour me; that it would be lucky if even one of them were implemented; and that I forgot to pass a resolution about punishment of students in national schools.

I hope the resolutions in the teachers' conference were adopted not merely to humour me but with the idea of implementing them. I have no doubts like those expressed by this brother. I have presumed that national schools shun physical punishment. If this were not so, some teachers would have raised a discussion. The other possibility is that punishment is too common to surprise anyone. I am not prepared to imagine this possibility. I hope that the correspondent will have noticed only a few instances. Those teachers who punish their students are not teachers but jailors. The function of the teacher is to stimulate and attract the student and thus to help his advancement. I take it that faith in the power of the rod in training a child has been discarded by now. Thousands of teachers all over the world have seen that a child can be brought up better by patience than by punishment; the latter in fact only shows the teacher's ignorance. It is the job of the teacher to make every subject interesting. A good teacher can make even a dry subject like Arithmetic interesting.

Were They Demons?

A gentleman has condemned Ramachandra, Yudhishthira[1] and Nala[2] and wants me to defend them. "Ramachandra made Sita go through the ordeal of fire and yet later abandoned her; Yudhishthira indulged in gambling and forfeited the right even to protect Draupadi; Nala cast aspersions on his wife and forsook her half naked in a dense forest. Should we call these three persons men or demons?"

This charge can only be answered by the poets or the virtuous heroines themselves. I judge as a layman and to me all the three

[1] Eldest of the five Pandava brothers in the *Mahabharata*

[2] King of Nishadha and husband of Damayanti in the *Mahabharata*

men appear worthy of reverence. Rama's story is extraordinary; but let us, for a moment, put the legendary Rama in line with the other two. If the three women had not been the wives of such heroes, history would not have remembered them as virtuous heroines. Damayanti never left chanting the name of Nala, Sita could not think of anyone in the world except Rama, and Draupadi, although indignant with Yudhishthira, would never move away from him. If we could enter the innermost hearts of these three men when they wronged their virtuous wives, we would be consumed by the fire of anguish seething there. Bhavabhuti[1] has given us a moving account of the misery experienced by Rama. The five brothers, who tended Draupadi like a fresh flower, used to listen patiently to her angry words. Nala was not himself when he did what he did. Even the gods watched from the heavens Nala's devotion to his wife when he sped away with Rituparna[2]. For me at any rate the testimony of these three noble wives is enough evidence. It is, however, true that the poets have depicted these three wives as more virtuous than their husbands. Rama, Nala, Dharmaraj[3] would become insignificant without Sita, Damayanti, Draupadi. The men are impulsive, their conscience is wayward and their devotion too is not undeviating; whereas the devotion of these heroines was steady like the lustre of a gem. The patience of women far surpasses that of men. Since forbearance is a mark of strength, these virtuous women were not weak but strong. What is man's courage before woman's? This weakness, however, is endemic to man as such, not particularly to Nala and the rest. The poets have depicted these women as embodiments of endurance. I do regard them as the pinnacle of virtue; but I cannot look upon their noble husbands as demons. Would not the fame of these women be sullied if we look on their husbands as demons? A demonic spirit cannot stay by the side of a virtuous woman. The husbands may well be considered inferior to their noble wives. But the men and women belong to the same category—both are worthy of reverence. I think it is equally wrong to regard everything old as despicable or as venerable. We should not give up the ideal of woman's duty while espousing the cause of her rights. I see no need for criticizing our ancient heroes in order to champion women's rights.

[1] Eighth-century Sanskrit poet and playwright

[2] King of Ayodhya, whom Nala served as a trainer of horses and as an accomplished cook

[3] Yudhishthira

CONTEMPT FOR "ANTYAJAS"

Contempt for *Antyajas* is in evidence more in Kathiawar than in the rest of Gujarat. *Antyaja* brothers hailing from Kathiawar bring such news and others confirm it. A gentleman writes that even now the *Antyajas* have to sufter the same humiliation in railway trains as before. They are not allowed to be seated. If they sit down, the other passengers keep at a distance, insult and abuse them. Such contempt is taken as a part of religion since many who perpetrate it flaunt a *tilak*[1] on their fore-heads. This contempt is not due to any uncleanness because the *Antyaja* brother can help himself and enjoy respect if he resorts to a small white lie. He has only to give out his caste as *Thakore* or *Rathod*. Only those who speak the truth have to suffer indignities. The *Antyaja* brothers who would not resort to untruth for the sake of momentary comfort are entitled to high praise. They thus prove that they are more virtuous than their revilers. If the railway officials are sympathetic, they can protect the poor *Antyajas*. Not all the passengers have this contempt for the *Antyajas*. Those who do not despise them should come forward as their protectors. The *Antyajas* should gain the confidence that the presence of a person with a khadi cap is a sure guarantee of their protection.

SHORTAGE OF SCHOOLS FOR "ANTYAJAS"

A gentleman writes:

> Towns like Gadhada, Umrala, Mahuwa, Talaja and Sihor in Bhavnagar have enough children to sustain *Antyaja* schools even today. A gentleman from Bombay has even offered to bear the expenses for a school in Mahuwa; but no local citizen is willing to undertake the management and hence the openning of a school has been postponed.

Is no one in Mahuwa and other towns prepared to undertake mere management of schools? If local citizens are not prepared, will not volunteers from other parts of Kathiawar undertake the work?

DISTRESSING

A perusal of the following description[2] of Dholka tahsil will distress the reader.

To sell out all cotton and all food-grains because they fetch a good price, is only buying trouble. A man cannot keep the

[1] Vermilion mark

[2] Not translated here. The letter narrated the disastrous rush among villagers to cash the crops.

money raised in this way and he is left in the end with the dust with which he had started. A man should retain at least his own requirements of cotton and food-grains.

Lack of Fellow-feeling

Another picture of the same tahsil is given below:[1]

The whole tragedy lies in *walking away*. We have not progressed beyond the family circle; that is why we cannot see our own good in what is good for our town. We were not very much concerned with the distress of Malabar. Mere preaching is the least effective in creating family ties among citizens. The effort may well start with preaching; but that is not enough. A tree does not take shape merely by our sowing a seed. It needs water and nurture and when it is just a sapling, it needs a fence. Without this, the whole effort may go waste. So with preaching too. We shall succeed only if we strive to strike root in one town and, through it, spread enlightenment to all other towns. If our objective is merely to collect funds, then it would be another matter. If, however, we wish to penetrate the hearts of people or to collect yarn from them, that can be achieved only by staying in the village. We shall progress faster if, instead of complaining against the people, we look critically at the shortcomings in our own work.

Foreign *v.* Swadeshi Sugar

A gentleman writes that I have not discussed in detail "which sugar may be considered pure and which foreign". It is not certain that bones, etc., are not used in refining swadeshi sugar. India imports sugar worth Rs. 180 million from other countries every year. I do not think that India can produce all this quantity in a short time. I myself use no sugar at all on most occasions. Its nutrient value is very small. Whatever sugar is necessary is available in sweet fruits. Chewing sugarcane is the best way of taking in sugar. When the season for sugarcane is at an end, one should use jaggery. Nevertheless, if one cannot do without sugar, one should try to get swadeshi sugar and should risk the possibility of shopkeepers making spurious mixtures.

Khadi-work in Kathiawar

I have recently read the distressing report published by Mr. Amhurst in *Vishwa Bharati* about conditions in Kathiawar.

[1] Not translated here. The correspondent described the indifference of villagers towards the digging of a well for their own benefit. The correspondent walked away in disgust.

Therein he says that there is progressive erosion of land and consequent danger of famine in Kathiawar on account of the destruction of forests. Since the area under pasture lands is decreasing, the once-famous cattle are decaying. The opening of factories in cities drains away the population from villages, and ultimately, the extinction of villages leads to the ruin of cities also. These changes will sap the artistic qualities of Kathiawar.

This is almost a prophecy. It applies to India as much as to Kathiawar. The latter being a very small peninsula, it can even now be protected; that is why Mr. Amhurst could grasp the past and the future during the present transition. I have often stated that modern industrialism can prosper only in those countries which import raw materials from outside, or in other words, an industrial country can only prosper at the expense of another country. India does not feed on any other country. She herself is the prey of other countries, namely, England, etc. If our cities too start preying like these countries, then the poor villager will have to suffer double exploitation.

Kathiawar can save itself to some extent from this awful situation. Trees should be planted and grown in every compound, the area under pasture should be increased and the craze for mills and ginning factories should be reduced. It does not need much mathematics to see that too many mills and ginning factories in a very small region are an unbearable burden on the people. If the princes and their ministers think calmly and unselfishly, they will realize that their sustenance depends upon the welfare of the villagers which requires the fulfilment of two conditions. Their farms should be prosperous and they should have some employment for their idle hours. This industry, being based entirely on cotton, is operated in the villagers' cottage. The spinning-wheel is its centre. One who sustains the wheel, sustains the people. The spread of foreign or mill-made cloth should not be tolerated in Kathiawar.

Khadi Association at Amreli

I wish as well as hope that Kathiawar will participate in the current efforts to popularize spinning. I therefore welcome the journal issued by the Khadi Association at Amreli; whoever wants to learn the processes or whoever wants to pay his contribution to the Congress in yarn, will find in the journal information regarding many facilities available to him. Training is also available to those who want to learn the processes. I hope many brothers and sisters from Kathiawar will benefit from these faci-

lities. It is necessary to remember that the object of the Congress resolution was to make the middle-classes spin religiously. If this effort succeeds, the cult of spinning will be revived and the hungry stomachs of the poor will be filled. Before the spinning-wheel finds a place in every home, faith in its power has to be inspired. This can be done if the middle-classes accept the spinning-wheel as a sacrament; popularization of khadi is as imperative as the spread of the spinning-wheel. The day when khadi sells as easily as ghee, we may presume that there will be no more starvation deaths in India. I wish that Kathiawar will play its full part in this divine sacrifice. The wonderful thing about this sacrifice is that one who performs it reaps his fruit immediately. If 2.6 million Kathiawaris put in labour worth one rupee on an average, they can save 2.6 million rupees every year.

I would advise the workers of the Khadi Association not to be the least disheartened about their work. Doubt and despondency seem to be taking root in the land these days. At the slightest sign of determination, the clouds of despondency will disperse.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 17-8-1924

6. *FOR GANDHIJI OR FOR THE COUNTRY*

A friend says that currently it has become a vogue insistently to ask the students, in the name of Gandhiji, to take up spinning. He wants to know if this is right.

So long as I work for the country and for the country alone, this sort of appeal, under certain circumstances and to a certain extent, is justifiable. The appeal to spin for me has more effect than the appeal to spin for the country. Still, it is of course right that everyone should spin for the country. It is even better to spin for oneself in the ideal sense of the word spinning. For every worker who works for the country works for himself also. He who works for himself alone does harm to himself. Our good should conform with the country's good. It should not be separated from the latter. Those who occasionally make a show of spinning and then stop it only throw dust into people's eyes.

[From Hindi]
Hindi Navajivan, 17-8-1924

7. *APOLOGY*

Hindi Navajivan completes its third year today. I regret to say I have not been able to do much writing exclusively for *Hindi Navajivan*. I want the readers to understand that the reason for this is not so much my unwillingness as the lack of time and to forgive me.

Hindi Navajivan has not yet become self-supporting. I have once said that it is not desirable from the public point of view to run a newspaper on loss. *Hindi Navajivan* is dedicated to the service of the people. Every reader should therefore consider it his own paper and try to make it self-supporting. At present 2,700 copies of it are sold. For it to be self-supporting at least 3,000 copies should be sold. I do hope the readers will try to make good this deficiency.

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 17-8-1924

8. *LETTER TO THE TRAFFIC SUPERINTENDENT, AJMER*

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
August 18, 1924

TO
The Traffic Superintendent
Ajmer

SIR,

I travelled 2nd class on Saturday last the 16th instant from Ahmedabad to Delhi. I had three third class attendants with me, of whom one, by permission of the Deputy Station Master, Ahmedabad, and under medical certificate, remained with me in the compartment. Two years ago before I was imprisoned I used to travel similarly on your as well as other Indian lines. Objection was once raised by a G.I.P.[1] Ticket Examiner. Till then I did not carry a medical certificate, as my delicate health I showed on my person. But on the G.I.P. Traffic Superintendent drawing my attention to the rule under which at-

[1] Great Indian Peninsular Railway

tendants with lower class tickets were allowed to travel with higher class invalid, I began to carry a medical certificate. This time too, therefore, I produced to the Station authorities at Ahmedabad a medical certificate copy of which is enclosed herewith.

On alighting at Delhi Station on the 17th instant, the Ticket Collector, having been advised that an attendant with a third class ticket had travelled with me demanded excess fare and penalty. One of my attendants explained to the Deputy Superintendent the circumstances under which he travelled second class with me, offered to produce the medical certificate and to read him the rule (copy of which he had taken from the Coaching Tariff, Part I, para 69) permitting passengers to carry an attendant with a lower class ticket. I am told he would not even look at these, and the Station Superintendent, who was sought to be approached through the Deputy Superintendent, would not even see my attendant. I regard these acts as highly impolite. The attendant in order to avoid any dispute paid Rs. 23 under protest. I enclose receipt therefor, and now beg to apply for refund of same for the reasons above mentioned.

I am,
Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

Enclosures: 1. Medical Certificate
2. Excess fare ticket No. A 90257

From a photostat: S.N. 10120

9. *TELEGRAM TO N. H. BELGAUMWALA*[1]

[On or after *August 19, 1924*]

NO COMPROMISE.[2] SENDING YOU CORRESPONDENCE MOTILAL[3]. ARRIVING AHMEDABAD TWENTY-THIRD.

The Hindu, 23-8-1924

[1] In reply to his telegram of August 19 to Gandhiji at Delhi, which read: "Much agitated statements in Press. Mrs. Naidu being authorized compromise. Anglo-Indian papers infer your separation from Congress. Wire attitude."

[2] With the Swarajists

[3] Nehru (1861-1931); lawyer and politician, twice president of the Indian National Congress

10. NOTES

The First Returns

How I wish the reader could share my delight, as I analyse the first returns of yarn in terms of the A.I.C.C.[1] resolution[2] on spinning. As yet I have before me only the Gujarat returns, Ahmedabad being the headquarters of the A.I.K.B.[3] The representatives bound to send their quota number 408. Of these only 169 have sent in their quota, i.e., only 42 per cent against 58 per cent defaulters. It is said that the others have not been able to send their quota owing to their being novices. The excuse is not valid, because Messrs Abbas Tyabji[4] and Vallabhbhai were novices but have been able to send over 5000 yards by reason of determined application. I hope, therefore, that the next month will see a full response. But the number of non-representatives more than makes up for the defaulters. For in all 672 persons have sent in their returns in Gujarat, i.e., 503 non-representatives have responded. This is truly encouraging. A little more organizing should show much better results. In fact if this sacrificial spinning movement spreads, it will show startling results from month to month. Of these nobody has sent less than 3000 yards. Many have sent in 5000 yards. One has sent 43,000 yards. This means a lot of work. The yarn is also perfectly even and well-twisted. Let not the reader imagine that he is a professional spinner. His practice does not extend to a long period. Another has sent in 12,000 yards. He has spun 24,000, but has retained 12,000 for his own use. A third has also sent in 11,000, though he has spun in all 27,000 yards. Both these are busy Congress representatives occupying very responsible positions. They could not send in such large amounts without putting in at least three hours' labour every day. They do not believe that the other work entrusted to them has suffered. They have put in this labour, because they are early risers and render an account of every minute at their disposal. One young man has spun 46,000 yards, though he has sent in only the required minimum.

[1] All-India Congress Committee

[2] *Vide* "First Test", 24-8-1924.

[3] All-India Khadi Board

[4] 1853-1936; nationalist Muslim leader of Gujarat; former judge of Baroda High Court

He cannot afford to send more. Let me add also that there are many who have spun much more than 3000 yards, but who are spinning for their own personal use and hence cannot afford to send in more than the minimum. Taking the districts, Kheda tops the list and Panchmahals comes last.

The Ali Brothers' Quota

The Big Brother made a mighty effort but succeeded in sending only one tola of indifferently-spun yarn. If there was no fear of the reader accusing me of partiality towards the Brothers, I would say that this is not a bad record for one who is constitutionally ill-fitted for continuous spinning and who is always on the move. Maulana Shaukat Ali has however given me the assurance that he is going to send the full quantity for the next month. Maulana Mahomed Ali has done better. I must let him speak for himself:

> I send with Shaukat the poor attempt of the President of the Congress at spinning. The history of my spinning is this. Never had I spun a yard of yarn in all my life, but after Ahmedabad I was determined to commence it the moment I settled down at Delhi. Continuous travelling was followed by illness, but on the 2nd August I sat down at long last to spin. Two skeins of thick, uneven, horrible yarn are the result of the work done on the 2nd and 3rd. But some of it was spun by my wife who acted as my tutor and afterwards also by Arif Hasvi who also taught me a little. On the 4th I spun the third skein but forgot to count the yards spun. I think it was about 110 yards. On the 5th, 6th and 7th I did about 300 yards and then had to go to Rampur to see mother, and I greatly regret that the charkha was left behind in my hurried and worried departure. On my return I did another 150 yards or so, but have been kept busy by the Hindu-Muslim negotiations, mother's illness and my own foot on which one carbuncle has not yet healed and another has made its appearance. The last (4th skein) is 462 yards and represents about 4 days' work. I promise you that God willing I will not only spin 2000 yards by the 15th September but will also make up the deficiency for August. Will you, in the meantime, accept the will for the deed?

This is remarkable for one who is ailing and also travelling. But I know that a President has to be exact and scrupulous about his own work before he can expect any from his followers. The Ali Brothers however represent not only the Congress but the Mussalmans also. The cry everywhere is that the Mussalmans are practically not responding to the call at all. It will require a tremendous effort to awaken them to a sense of their duty. And

if the Mussalmans come up to the Hindu level in spinning, their work will react upon the Hindus. Boycott of foreign cloth will then become an accomplished fact and with it will be achieved the economic salvation of the masses. With that salvation will come self-confidence. Self-confidence must lead to swaraj.

PRINCIPAL GIDWANI[1]

It is reported that Principal Gidwani has lost 30 lb. in weight in the Nabha Jail and that Mrs. Gidwani in spite of repeated requests has not received any reply as to when she can visit her husband. This is callous indifference. The administrator may at least issue regular bulletins regarding Principal Gidwani's health and let the public know the real state of his health. Why Mrs. Gidwani should be prevented from seeing her husband as often as she likes is also difficult to understand. My sympathies go out to her. I know however that she is the brave wife of a brave husband. The only advice I can tender to the lady is to be "careful for nothing" and feel that God will take better care of her husband than any human agency. She and we should realize that as satyagrahis and non-co-operators we must expect treatment such as is being meted out to her and her husband. If Acharya Gidwani will change his "creed" he can now procure his discharge. He has but to apologize for his brave and human conduct in crossing the Nabha border and he will be set free. But he will do no such thing. It is the article of a satyagrahi's faith to prefer imprisonment to degrading liberty.

WANTON DESECRATION

If the *communique* of the District Magistrate of Moradabad is to be relied upon, the news contained in it is serious and disquieting. Two temples are reported to have been desecrated and the Hindus assembled seriously assaulted. No cause for this wanton desecration has been assigned. A similar incident is reported to have taken place at Amethi in the Lucknow district. Here the Hindus are supposed to have blown conches in defiance, it is said, of a magisterial order. If they did, it was for the magistrate to punish the offenders, not for the Mussalmans to enter the temple in a large body and commit assaults and desecrate temples. There is no doubt that these cases have an organization at their back. It represents a deliberate attempt to create dissensions and prevent Hindu-Muslim unity. What

[1] Asudomal Tekchand Gidwani of the Gujarat Vidyapith

the organization can hope to gain by such acts is difficult to understand. It cannot enhance the dignity of Islam, it cannot popularize it. If it is material gain that is sought, it is not possible to achieve it. And if the organizers seek to gain Government favour by these methods, they will soon find themselves undeceived.

Natal Indians

It is a pathetic cable from the Natal Indians protesting against the passing of the ordinance disenfranchising Natal Indians from voting at municipal elections. This fight commenced in 1894. It was finally decided in favour of the Indian settlers. The then Natal Government admitted that it would be most unjust to deprive the Indian taxpayer of the municipal franchise. The Indian settler submitted to the virtual deprivation of the political franchise. But no past promises or undertakings bind governments when they wish to change policies or principles. We have seen this illustrated often enough in the history of Indians in South Africa. Almost every assurance given to them has been violated on due occasion. Our bewildered countrymen make a pathetic appeal to the nation for help. Little do they know that we are powerless to give them real assistance. Sympathy they have. Newspaper articles they will have, but I fear that beyond that they are likely to get very little. If the Government of India move, for very shame, to protect them against impending spoliation, it can do so with effect. I say "impending", for the ordinance requires the sanction of the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa. He has once refused to sanction such an ordinance. If he exercises his prerogative, he can save the Indians the insult that the ordinance implies. Every letter received by me from South Africa during Mrs. Naidu's[1] stay there showed the high hopes our people built on the brilliant mission of Mrs. Naidu. But the South African Europeans can be courteous and yet carry out their determination, though it may be, as this is, totally unjust. They have learnt under General Smuts[2] the art of being sweetly unjust. The ultimate remedy lies with our countrymen themselves.

[1] Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949); poet, patriot, Congress leader and a close associate of Gandhiji

[2] 1870-1950; South African soldier and statesman; Prime Minister of South African Union, 1919-24 and 1939-48

Kenya Decision

The Colonial Secretary's announcement about the Kenya Indians is an artful performance. It reads perfectly innocent. But it has practically taken away everything that our countrymen of Kenya were fighting for. Mr. Thomas has shelved the immigration measure. It means very little. There was no urgency about it. And with the unfavourable decision on the other points, the immigration will be automatically checked. The Indians claimed to retain the right to own land in the Highlands. They claimed equal general franchise. They wanted fair fight and no favour. The announcement takes away the right of owning land in the healthiest part of Kenya. It seeks to give communal franchise which in effect means no effective political power for our countrymen. The struggle has been going on for several years. All Indians, Moderates and others, united last year. They proclaimed even a boycott of British goods. But the import of British goods remained unaffected and the Kenya Indians have gained little for the agitation. We have not the power, or more accurately we do not know how to use the power we have. Let the reader understand the distinction between Kenya and Natal. Natal has dominion status. Kenya has not. The decision in Natal is an act of the local legislature. There is therefore still hope of relief. In Kenya the decision now is that of the Imperial Government. Therefore it is practically final.

Young India, 21-8-1924

11. *BOLSHEVISM OR DISCIPLINE?*[1]

Two American friends have written to me a passionately-worded letter saying that in the name of religion I am probably introducing in India Bolshevism which knows no God or morality and is frankly atheistic. They say that the alliance between Mussalmans and myself is an unholy alliance and a menace to the world, for, they argue, Mussalmans are today aiming at supremacy in the East with the help of Bolshevic Russia. I have heard this charge hurled against me before now, but I have hitherto taken no notice of it. But it seems to me it is time for me to consider it when it is brought by responsible foreign friends

[1] For M.N. Roy's reply to this article, *vide* Appendix I; for Gandhiji's comments on the reply, *vide* "Meaning of Bolshevism", 1-1-1925.

in all good faith. In the first place I must confess that I do not know the meaning of Bolshevism. I know that there are two opposite parties, one painting it in the blackest colours, the other hailing it as deliverance for the downtrodden masses all the world over. I do not know what to believe. All I can say is that my movement is not atheistic. It is not a denial of God. It has been undertaken in His name and is being continued with constant prayer. It is undoubtedly a mass movement but it seeks to touch the masses through their hearts, their better nature. It is a process of discipline and hence it is that it has filled even some of the best of my co-workers with despair.

I am proud of the alliance between the Mussalmans and myself. Islam is not a denial of God. It is a passionate avowal of one supreme deity. Not even its worst detractors have accused Islam of atheism. If therefore Bolshevism is atheism, there can be no common ground between it and Islam. They must in that case come to death-grip. It will be an embrace of opponents, not of friends. I have retained the American letter phraseology. But let me inform my American readers and others that I am under no delusion. My pretension is very humble. The alliance there is between the Ali Brothers and myself, i.e., between a few valued Mussalman friends and myself. I would love to call it an alliance between Mussalmans and Hindus—not myself. But that seems to have been a day-dream. In truth therefore one may say, there is an alliance between some Mussalmans including the Ali Brothers and some Hindus including myself. How far it carries us, the future will show. There is no vagueness about the alliance. It is the most natural thing in the world. It is tragic that it excites wonder and even apprehension. What can be more natural than that Hindus and Mussalmans, born and bred in India, having the same adversities, the same hopes, should be permanent friends, brothers born of the same mother-India? The surprise is that we should fight, not that we should unite. And why should the combination be a menace to the world? The greatest menace to the world today is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which through the enslavement of India is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races of the world. That imperialism is a negation of God. It does ungodly acts in the name of God. It covers its inhumanities, Dyerisms and O'Dwyerisms under cover of humanity, justice and righteousness. And the pity of it is that the majority of Englishmen do not know that their name is being exploited. The great pity of it is that sober, godfearing Eng-

lishmen are beguiled into the belief that all is well when all is ill with India, that all is well with the African races when they are being exploited and degraded in their name. If the defeat of Germany and the central powers ended the German peril, the victory of the Allies has brought into being a peril no less deadly for the peace of the world. I wish therefore that the so-called alliance between Mussalmans and Hindus will become a permanent reality based on a frank recognition of enlightened self-interest. It will then transmute the iron of sordid imperialism into the gold of humanitarianism. The Hindu-Muslim alliance is intended to be a blessing to India and to the world for it is conceived in a spirit of peace and goodwill to all. It has adopted non-violence and truth as the indispensable means for achieving swaraj in India. Its symbol—the charkha, the spinning-wheel—is a symbol of simplicity, self-reliance, self-control, voluntary co-operation among millions. If such an alliance proves a menace to the world, then there is no God or God is asleep.

Young India, 21-8-1924

12. *WASTE OF ENERGY?*

A friend has invited my attention to an article in the *Welfare* of May last which is an examination by Mr. M. N. Roy[1] of Acharya Ray's[2] address at the opening of the khaddar exhibition at Cocanada. The copy has been lying among my papers for fully two months. I am sorry that I have not been able to read the article before now. Having read it I feel that Mr. Roy's refutation of Dr. Ray's contentions has been often refuted in these pages. But as readers have short memories, it is perhaps as well for me to re-state the arguments in a connected form. Dr. Ray's critic considers that all the effort made on behalf of the charkha is "a waste of energy". The central point in Dr. Ray's argument is that the charkha has a message specially for the peasant in that it enables him to utilize his idle hours. The critic contends that the peasant has not any idle hours to utilize. What leisure he has he needs. If he is idle for four months, it is because he has over-worked himself for eight months and that if he is made to work the four months at the wheel, his efficiency for eight months' work will deteriorate from year to year. In

[1] Thinker and writer; founder of the Radical Democratic Party

[2] P. C. Ray (1861-1944); scientist and patriot

other words according to the critic the nation has no leisure for the charkha.

It appears to me that the critic has little if any experience of the peasantry of India. Nor has he been able to picture to himself the way the charkha would work, and indeed is working today. The peasantry does not need to slave at the charkha. It affords a pleasant variety and recreation after hard toil. As a permanent institution, it is presented to the women of India. They will spin during odd moments. If the majority of the toilers were to give on an average half an hour per day they would spin enough yarn for themselves and to spare for the rest. Such worker would add to his or her income at least Rs. 1-11-0 per year—not a bad addition to the income of a starving person. It is admitted that there are enough handlooms and weavers today in India to weave all the cloth we may require. The only question is therefore that of hand-spinning. If the peasantry would take to it, the problem could be solved without any great outlay of capital, of India becoming self-supporting for her cloth. This would mean at least sixty million rupees circulating among the millions of spinners and thousands of carders and weavers of India working in their own cottages and to that extent raising the earning capacity of the peasantry.

It is the experience all the world over that peasants need a subsidiary occupation to supplement their earnings or occupy their leisure hours. It must not be forgotten that not very long ago India's women spun during spare hours all the yarn it required. Revival of spinning has demonstrated the truth of the statement in a most striking manner. It is an error to suppose that the movement has failed. The workers have indeed partly failed. But wherever they have done their work well, it has continued. It is true that it has not yet acquired stability. This is because of incomplete organization and also because the spinners are not yet sure of being steadily employed. I invite Mr. Roy to study the conditions in the Punjab, Karnatak, Andhra, parts of Tamilnad and he will find out for himself what possibilities spinning has.

India is a land of famines. Is it better that men and women should break stones, or card and spin? Through chronic famine conditions, the people of Orissa have been reduced to beggary. It is the most difficult thing now even to make them work. They are slowly dying out. Revival of spinning is their only hope.

Mr. Roy lays stress upon improved agriculture. This is necessary. But spinning is not to replace the contemplated improve-

ment. On the contrary it will herald it. This improvement has tremendous difficulties in its way. We have to surmount the unwillingness of the Government, the want of capital and the obstinate refusal of the peasant to take to new methods. What is claimed for spinning is that

1. it supplies the readiest occupation to those who have leisure and are in want of a few coppers;
2. it is known to the thousands;
3. it is easily learnt;
4. it requires practically no outlay of capital;
5. the wheel can be easily and cheaply made. Most of us do not yet know that spinning can be done even with a piece of tile and a splinter;
6. the people have no repugnance to it;
7. it affords immediate relief in times of famine and scarcity;
8. it alone can stop the drain of wealth which goes outside India in the purchase of foreign cloth;
9. it automatically distributes the millions thus saved among the deserving poor;
10. even the smallest success means so much immediate gain to the people;
11. it is the most potent instrument of securing co-operation among the people.

The difficulties in the way are want of faith among the middle-classes which alone can supply the required number of workers. The greater difficulty still is the disinclination of the people to take to khaddar in the place of the fine-looking mill-made cloth. The dearness of khaddar during the transition stage is an additional difficulty. If the people respond to the spinning resolution in sufficient numbers, khaddar can be made to compete with mill-made cloth. There is no doubt that the movement does require for its success a little sacrifice on the part of the people. Even this direct sacrifice will not be necessary if we had our own Government mindful of the wants of the peasants and determined to protect them against foreign competition. Voluntary sacrifice for a time by the middle-class can do what the Government would do if it was national.

There is no question of waste of energy. Have the thousands of our sisters, to whom Dr. Ray was previously giving doles of charity and is now giving honourable employment and making them partly or wholly self-supporting, wasted their energy? They have no other occupation save that of begging or starving. Is it

waste of energy for young men to be going to the villages, studying their wants, feeling for them and helping them onward? Is it waste of energy for thousands of well-to-do young men and women to think of the poor half-fed millions and for their sakes to set apart half an hour religiously to spinning on their behalf? If one man or woman spins for a few pice, when he or she has no other occupation, it is so much gain; if one man or woman spins as a sacrifice, it is also so much gain. If there is one activity in which it is all gain and no loss, it is hand-spinning.

Young India, 21-8-1924

13. UNDER CONSCIENCE'S COVER

A correspondent says in effect:

> Do you know what you have done by continually harping on conscience. I find youngsters and grown-up people talking utter nonsense under cover of conscience. What is more, youngsters have become impudent and grown-up people unscrupulous; can you not prevent this mischief? If you cannot, please withdraw the word from use and stop the drivel that is being said in the name of that sacred but much abused word. Pray tell us who has a conscience? Do all have it? Do cats have a conscience when they hunt to death poor mice?

I have not given the correspondent's question in his own words. I have endeavoured to paraphrase it. In doing so I hope I have done no injustice to him.

I must confess that the charge is not without substance. But he has presented only the dark side. Every virtue has been known to be abused by the wicked. But we do not on that account do away with virtue. We can but erect safeguards against abuse. When people cease to think for themselves and have everything regulated for them, it becomes necessary at times to assert the right of individuals to act in defiance of public opinion or law which is another name for public opinion. When individuals so act, they claim to have acted in obedience to their conscience. I entirely agree with the correspondent that youngsters as a rule must not pretend to have conscience. It is a quality or state acquired by laborious training. Wilfulness is not conscience. A child has no conscience. The correspondent's cat does not go for the mouse in obedience to the call of conscience. It does so in obedience to its nature. Conscience is the ripe fruit of strictest discipline. Irresponsible youngsters therefore who have never

obeyed anything or anybody save their animal instinct have no conscience, nor therefore have all grown-up people. The savages for instance have to all intents and purposes no conscience. Conscience can reside only in a delicately tuned breast. There is no such thing therefore as mass conscience as distinguished from the consciences of individuals. It is safe therefore to say that when a man makes everything a matter of conscience, he is a stranger to it. It is a truthful saying that "conscience makes cowards of us all". A conscientious man hesitates to assert himself, he is always humble, never boisterous, always compromising, always ready to listen, ever willing, even anxious to admit mistakes.

The correspondent is needlessly agitated. What does it matter that fifty thousand people say they act or refrain for conscience's sake? The world has no difficulty in distinguishing between conscience and an arrogant or ignorant assumption of it. Such men would have acted in similar circumstances exactly as they would under cover of conscience. The introduction of conscience into our public life is welcome even if it has taught a few of us to stand up for human dignity and rights in the face of the heaviest odds. These acts will live for ever, whereas those done under shams are like soap-bubbles enjoying a momentary existence.

Young India, 21-8-1924

14. DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY

Here is what a worker in the South writes about the *Panchamas*[1]:

> I am just returning from a *Panchama* gathering. It was all very nice and encouraging. But as we returned from the *Panchama* quarter, we passed through the main village. There was an ominous-looking party of villagers, all ryots, non-Brahmin peasants, gathered under the village banyan tree. They stood up when we stopped to greet them. A conversation ensued which dispelled my fond visions. It was a khaddar-producing village. It was obvious khaddar-work was going to stop, for they don't like this untouchability business. We could not get a bullock cart to negotiate the country road. We somehow reached our car on the main road late in the night and after a few tyre-punctures and halts reached home at midnight, sad and not very sleepy. This is nothing. Only in

[1] Regarded as untouchables

> the South this untouchability business is too big and all of us with all our resources can be at it for years. We run it now as a subordinate part of Congress work. It won't do!

Of course it won't do. Untouchability is a terrible reality. If they had a tongue, we should not be able to sleep for the noise the untouchables would make about the treatment meted out to them in the name of religion.

We have only played at it. We have neither sacrificed ease nor time, much less money at all commensurate with the work required, whereas we Hindus will have to pour our blood like water in order to achieve the end. Let us, reformers, at once admit that we are on this question in a hopeless minority. I verily believe that the adoption of the reform by the Congress has given it a tremendous momentum. But it has only touched the fringe of the problem. We have not seriously tackled it. We wanted excitement of a sort. The work of untouchability can bring no such excitement. It requires silent, self-effacing work. On the one hand we have to break down the wall of prejudice, not by violence but by patient effort that only love can evoke. The moment we lose temper with the orthodox, we lose ground and make our own and the *Panchamas*' position worse than before. We have to reason with them, we must put up with their taunts, their insults, yes, even their kicks without retaliation. We will then have produced an atmosphere that will enable truth to reveal itself to the orthodox people.

We must know our own mind. We must not have many minds on this question. Let us understand that this is not a question of inter-dining nor of inter-marrying. Nor is it a question of abolition of *varna-dharma* mistranslated caste. It is a question purely and simply of removing untouchability, of abolishing the unwarranted fifth division. We have a school of reform that aims at a total abolition of the *varna-dharma*. This is not the place to examine the merits of the reform. The movement against untouchability restricts itself to removing the sinful superstition that mere touch of a person, because he is born in a particular group, is a pollution to be atoned for. The more the movement progresses in extent and intensity, the more urgent it becomes to understand and scrupulously to abide by its limitations. Thus whilst we challenge orthodoxy, we must assure it at the same time that we mean no more than we say. It must be enabled to understand the full scope of the movement. Letters I receive weekly show that the minimum has not always been kept steadily

in view. The orthodox people have become naturally alarmed. It makes the reformer's task far more difficult than it need be.

On the other hand we must be equally patient with the *Panchama* brother. He does not always appreciate our effort. He often distrusts us. I know untouchable parents who resent their children being taught the degradation and unhealthiness of eating the remains of cooked food from the dishes of the touchables. Some resent even cleanliness itself. They cling to their habits with almost as much tenacity as the orthodox to their belief in pollution.

A reformer of the average type, therefore, when he realizes the immensity of the work before him, is likely to despair, if not actually to begin to think that the untouchables deserve the treatment they receive, as if they are to blame for the circumstances in which they find themselves.

It is perhaps now clear why I say that we might have to pour out our blood like water before the curse is removed and Hinduism becomes purified.

Young India, 21-8-1924

15. NEGROES' SYMPATHY

I gladly publish and gratefully acknowledge the following cable from New York:

> The Negroes of the world through us send you greetings for fight for the freedom of your people and country. We are with you. Fourth Annual International Convention Negro Peoples of the World. Marius Garney, Chairman.

Theirs is perhaps a task more difficult than ours. But they have some very fine workers among them. Many students of history consider that the future is with them. They have fine physique. They have a glorious imagination. They are as simple as they are brave. M. Finot has shown by his scientific researches that there is in them no inherent inferiority as is commonly supposed to be the case. All they need is opportunity. I know that if they have caught the spirit of the Indian movement, their progress must be rapid.

Young India, 21-8-1924

16. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Sravana Krishna 7 [*August 21, 1924*[1]]

DEAR SHRI GHANSHYAMDAS[2],

God has provided me with conscience-keepers. You, I think, are one of them. Some of my own children, some ladies and a few grown-ups like Jamnalalji[3] and yourself want to make me a perfect man. Regarding you thus, how could I be offended by your letter? In fact, I want you always to caution me in this manner.

You complain against three things: One, my absolving the Swaraj Party of the charge of corruption; two, my giving a testimonial to Suhrawardy; and, three, my trying to get Sarojini Devi elected as [Congress] President.

In the first place, it is one's duty to say only that which, after a painstaking inquiry, one has come to regard as the truth, even if the world considers it to be an error. In no other way can one become fearless. I cannot consider anything dearer to me than *moksha*[4]. Yet even that *moksha* I would renounce if it were to conflict with truth and non-violence. In all these three things I only followed truth. When I said that, I had in mind what you had told me at Juhu. In the absence of any definite proof, it becomes my duty to treat the Swaraj Party as free from the guilt imputed to it. If there is any evidence that you can furnish I shall certainly examine it. I shall even make it public if you will allow me to do so; if not I shall know and keep it to myself and remain silent.

As for Suhrawardy, I only testified to his sagacity and I am having practical experience of it even now.

About Sarojini Devi your fears are, I think, uncalled for. I hold strongly that she has served India well and is still doing so. While I have done nothing so far for her presidentship, I do believe that if the others who have so far occupied that office were fit for it, she too is fit. Everybody is charmed with her en-

[1] The year is taken from the addressee's book, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma.*

[2] b. 1894; industrialist and mill-owner; chairman, Harijan Sevak Sangh

[3] Bajaj (1889-1942); social worker and philanthropist; close associate of Gandhiji; treasurer of Indian National Congress for many years

[4] Deliverance, liberation

thusiasm. I can bear witness to her courage. I have noticed nothing blameworthy in her character.

Please do not conclude from this that I approve of everything done by her or anyone else.

> God has filled this world with objects, animate and inanimate, good and bad. The wise man considers only the good and ignores the bad, even as the swan leaves the water and takes only the milk from a mixture of milk and water.[1]

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6030. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

17. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Sravana Krishna 8 [*August 22, 1924*][2]

DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Pandit Sunderlal saw me here and asked me if I had received your letter. I told him I had and that I had also sent you a reply. Sunderlal says that you had not received my letter till you left for Hardwar and wants me to write another. I do not wish to write to you anything concerning the financial help asked of you. If you want any advice as to whether or not you should give Sunderlal any financial help, you had better consult Jamnalalji. Sunderlal says he wants your help independently of me and wants me only to write to you about his work. I can certainly say that Sunderlalji is a patriot, a non-co-operator, full of enthusiasm, has great capacity for work and commands influence over youth. He is very independent-minded.

I had wired to you when I left Ahmedabad. I am leaving for the Ashram today. So far nothing has been achieved here. Both the parties are thinking over my advice.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6031. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] Tulsidas's *Ramacharitamanasa*, "Balakanda"

[2] From the reference to "leaving for the Ashram today"; Gandhiji left Delhi for Ahmedabad on 22-8-1924.

18. INTERVIEW TO A.P.I. ON HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

DELHI,
August 22, 1924

Mr. Gandhi left for Ahmedabad this morning *en route* to Bombay. Interviewed, he said that negotiations were still going on between Hindus and Mussalmans for a compromise and the situation was as hopeful as ever.[1] This is all, he said, he could say at present.

Asked when he would return to Delhi, Mr. Gandhi said he would come to Delhi if his presence was required by Mr. Mahomed Ali.

Further asked whether he could not say something more hopeful, Mr. Gandhi cross-questioned saying, "Is this not hopeful enough?"

Before parting, he told Mr. Mahomed Ali to work hard. Since he does not regard the situation in Delhi as a mere local affair and since he is said to be averse to a patched-up peace, it is stated that these negotiations had taken a longer time and might take a little more time.

The Hindu, 22-8-1924

19. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Sravana Vad 9 [*August 23, 1924*]

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I am just now in the train. I am going back from Delhi to the Ashram. Talks of compromise are going on in Delhi. I have not received Motilalji's letter. Let things be done in your province so far as they do not violate principles of morality. It is enough if we go on doing our duty with a detached mind.

Ghanshyamdas was not in Delhi. I had already received the money from him. I had asked Chhaganlal[2] to write to you and find out how the money could be sent to you without incurring any expense. Mahadev, Devdas and Pyarelal are with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2849

[1] Gandhiji had personally visited the scene of the riots.
[2] Gandhiji's nephew

20. LETTER TO BHAVANI DAYAL

ON THE TRAIN,
Sravana Krishna 9 [*August 23, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI BHAVANI DAYAL,

It is only today that I am able to reply to your letter. There is no need to apologize. I am glad you now understand the South African struggle better. I do not have one moment to spare. I send you only this article. I see that for progress there is nothing else but to practise austerity.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

SJT. BHAVANI DAYAL
P.O. JACOBS
NATAL
SOUTH AFRICA

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6032. Courtesy: Vishnu Dayal

21. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

August 23, 1924

BHAI SAHIB,

Bhur-r-r-r[2]

I am glad to have your letter. You will not find it so troublesome after you get used to the spinning-wheel. Try to avoid looking that side.

You have made a good collection for the Muslim Boarding.

Convey my *Vandemataram*, or salaam—whatever they wish—to Mrs. Abbas and the girls.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9548

[1] From the postmark
[2] This was a form of greeting used by Gandhiji and the addressee for each other.

22. *SPEECH AT LABOURERS' MEETING, AHMEDABAD*

August 23, 1924

About 5,000 labourers assembled on the river-bed outside Shahpur Gate, Ahmedabad City, on August 23 to present a purse of Rs. 3,000 to M. K. Gandhi. The Secretary of the Union, Gulzarilal Nanda, described the help that the Mahatma had so often given to the labourers of Ahmedabad.

Gandhi asked the labourers if they had any complaints to make to him. Various questions regarding the internal economy of the Union were brought up. Gandhi urged them to be self-reliant and to control their own institutions. They were the masters of the Union. They should appoint such officials as would serve their ends honestly, be they Hindus or Mohammedans. He also urged them to use khaddar.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1924, p. 557, para 1246

23. *FIRST TEST*

The delegates from Gujarat have failed in the first test. Out of 408 delegates, 169 have delivered their quota of yarn. 239 could not do so. What is the sense of 42 per cent giving and 58 per cent not giving? If swaraj hangs by a thread, why should a majority of delegates fail in the test itself? If a majority of the partners of a firm do not abide by its rules, what will be the fate of the firm?

If the ocean catches fire, who can put it out? If sugar ceases to be sweet, who can sweeten it? If delegates do not fulfil their pledge, what hope should be entertained from the general public?

Gujarat's resolve is uncompromising. Whoever has not delivered yarn, vacates his seat. If any delegate has a special excuse for not spinning, he can escape by paying a fine fixed by himself. I think the best way for a delegate who has no honest excuse for not spinning is to resign. A resignation devoid of bitterness or hatred is a welcome act. I think it is right for a man to resign if he has no faith in the spinning-wheel. Those who have not spun because of indolence should tender their resignation, overcome their indolence, practise regular spinning and then enrol themselves as delegates. Day by day the Congress should become a purer and a stronger organization.

The non-delegates have, however, surpassed the delegates. Those who have delivered yarn upto the 15th of August numbered 672. That means, leaving out the delegates, 503 brothers and sisters have delivered yarn. I think this is a hopeful situation. This figure does not surprise me. The essence of the resolution adopted by the A.I.C.C. was that, inspired by the example of delegates, lakhs of brothers and sisters would contribute their body-labour for half an hour every day as a matter of sacrifice. It is therefore my hope that during the coming month more than 503 brothers and sisters will deliver the yarn spun by themselves.

The break-up of delegates who have delivered yarn is as follows:

	No. of delegates	No. who have delivered yarn	No. who have not
A.I.C.C.	11	10	1
Provincial Committee	68	46	22
Ahmedabad	52	23	29
Kheda	117	38	79
Broach	82	26	56
Surat	78	26	52
Panchmahal	—	—	—
	408	169	239

The proportion of miscellaneous contributors of yarn is as follows:

Ahmedabad	53
Ashram	84
Kheda—	
Borsad	99
Petlad	26
Kapadwanj	23
Nadiad	65
Bhadran	15
Baroda	5
Anand	18
Mehmadabad	3
Cambay	2

Surat—	
Bardoli	61
Others	21
Broach	12
Khadimandal	16
Total	503

We can learn a good deal from the above figures. Wherever greater work was put in more yarn has been collected. It is not as if Kheda has delivered more yarn because the Kheda people know spinning better. It is because more work has been put in there that more brothers and sisters from Kheda have delivered yarn. Panchmahals should have produced a heap. It is not a matter of small regret that name after name of delegates from that area has drawn a blank. What is the meaning of only 12 persons spinning in Broach? There is almost no name from Kathiawar in the miscellany. What does it show?

It is easy to give money. It appears, however, that it is difficult to contribute half an hour's labour.

Some people say that they should be free to labour in the manner they choose. If anyone says so, he does not recognize the value of organization. A drop of rain has no value in the rainy season, but drops of rain can change a famine into plenty. If the drops, however numerous, become self-willed and do not run together, they will all perish. Similarly, if many men and women render service at their own sweet will, it will be wasted. If many men and women undertake some work under rules and regulations, that work becomes effective. Therefore, it is in their interest as well as in the interest of the nation that those who wish to serve should do so in a disciplined manner.

The number of persons in Gujarat who have delivered yarn in odd quantities is thus hopeful but not surprising. It is hopeful in this that the number of persons delivering yarn is increasing every month. I hope that the 672 persons who have started spinning will comply with the rule and deliver yarn every month.

A gratifying aspect has yet to be reported, namely, many persons have spun very large quantities of yarn. Abbas Saheb and Vallabhbhai have each delivered 5000 yards of yarn. A brother has spun and delivered 43,000 yards. Another has spun 27,000 yards and delivered 11,000 yards out of them. A third has spun 24,000 yards and delivered 12,000. The last two persons have been able to spin so much in spite of being occupied with

heavy work. A young man has spun 46,000 yards but donated only 3000 because it is beyond his means to donate the entire yarn. I myself know many persons who spin so much, but since they insist on making their cloth from the yarn spun by themselves, they cannot donate much yarn. These figures prove that spinning 3000 yards every month is the easiest form of labour and it is as urgent as it is easy.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 24-8-1924

24. *MY NOTES*

Barren Parliament

A journalist has made these remarks:[1]

Parliament is indeed barren. I do not imagine that its nature can change in India. I live, however, in the hope that our Parliament will only remain barren and not give birth to a wicked son. I cannot abandon practical considerations. The ideal is one only, namely, *Ramarajya*. But where can we find Rama? The journalist says, "whom the people approve". People means Parliament and, in our view, whomsoever the Parliament approves is a virtuous man or woman. I am suggesting many ways to ensure that the voice of Parliament is really the voice of the people and not that of hired voters. With this end in view I am searching for a device which will enable us to listen to the voice of the entire people. All systems are bound to be defective. We are looking for a system which will yield maximum benefit to India. Good men can transform a bad system into a good one—like the wise housewife who transforms dust into grains. Wicked men can misuse the best of systems and make it defective, like a foolish housewife who allows bright food grains to decay into dust. I am therefore on the look-out for good men in India and employing devices to sort out such men. But what can a man do? He can only make an honest effort. The fruit lies in the hands of God. The efforts of many, and not one, are required for securing the desired fruit. Many other factors determine the fruit. Therefore "one step is enough" for us.

[1] Not translated here. They were critical of the British parliamentary system.

Inner Voice

The same journalist says:[1]

All this criticism is true; but these errors are unavoidable. Should we abandon truth because falsehood parades under the garb of truth? Man has to cultivate the inner sense. It does not belong to every man as a natural gift. Its cultivation needs spiritual surroundings and constant effort. It is a delicate plant. Children do not have anything like an inner voice. Those who are considered barbarous have no inner sense. The inner sense reflects the impact produced by a cultivated intellect on the heart. It would therefore be ridiculous if every man claimed to possess an inner voice.

Even then, there is not the least cause for apprehension if many people claim it. Injustice cannot be justified in the name of conscience. Moreover, those who work under the false pretext of an inner voice are not prepared to undergo suffering. Their activities will come to a halt after a little while. It would, therefore, not harm the world if any number of people made this claim. Those who have played pranks with this delicate device are likely to ruin themselves, not others. Newspapers provide many instances of this truth. Many newspapers are at present engaged in spreading poison in the name of public service. This business will not, however, last long. One day or other, people are bound to get sick of it. The Punjab is the greatest culprit in this respect. It is surprising that such dirty journals can manage to pay their way. Why do people encourage them? As long as moneyed men are there, thieves would not starve. Similarly, when a section of the people are prepared to read poisonous writings, such journals are bound to prosper. The only cure consists in the cultivation of a clean public opinion.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 24-8-1924

[1] Not translated here

25. *LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

SABARMATI,
August 24, 1924

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI[1],

Mahadev has shown me your letter to him. You must not despond. For Mrs. Naidu to say that I am despondent is a libel. It is true that I am groping. There are things about which I give no clear-cut decisions. But that is to admit that we are voyaging in uncertain waters.

Remember we are satyagrahis. Let me apply to the situation the law of the family. Assume that two brothers are quarrelling over the inheritance. Both want to use it for the good of the family. One at least knows he does not need it to serve the family. The majority of the clan would have him to cling to the inheritance. But is it not the duty of the satyagrahi brother to forgo the inheritance and avoid a quarrel and consequent waste of time and energy? Is the case any different here? However, I am acting cautiously. All I am trying to do is to avoid an unseemly wrangle. I will take up the Presidentship[2], if I find that it will serve the country. There is plenty of time to decide. The returns of spinning are proving most instructive. Is it much use my presiding if the returns remain as poor as they are?[3] Will it not then be better to retire from the Congress and have a rigid programme and a membership that is honest and willing? Is it any use having a vote for the wheel from persons clad in foreign stuff? And think of the exploitation of the simple folk for capturing the Congress! Will the so-called No-changers remain strictly honest? Picture to yourself the whole working. If we cannot retain the Congress without this tug of war, we must willingly surrender it. I have thought deeply over your letters but feel sure that I must retire from any such contest. But for the present I am simply watching. Am waiting for Motilalji's answer.

Now for Malabar. I have applications from many sources. What would you have me to do? I was thinking of sending

[1] b. 1879; lawyer, journalist, author and statesman; Governor-General of India, 1948-50

[2] Of Belgaum Congress

[3] *Vide* "First Test", 24-8-1924.

some one to make special report in collaboration with you. But as nothing has yet been done I would like your suggestions. Plenty of clothing has been collected. Please guide me about its disposal too.

I have not been able to make much headway in Delhi. There is still some prospect of a settlement. But the thing is very delicate.

Yes, your guess is correct. The fair friend is Sarladevi[1]. She wants to bombard me with more stuff but I have refused to give further accommodation. There are some beautiful letters from Brahmins in repudiation. I have published one.

Yours,
M. K. G.

[PS.]

My Programme:

29th to 3rd September Bombay, 4th Poona, 5th Bombay. Then uncertain, probably leave Bombay for Delhi on 5th.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

26. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[Before *August 25, 1924*][2]

MY DEAREST CHARLIE[3],

I have your wire[4] from Rangoon. I have received all the articles you have sent.

About opium I have done all, I think, you would have wished. Somehow or other I seem, in this matter, to be acting more for you than for the thing itself.

[1] Niece of Rabindranath Tagore; married to Rambhuj Dutt Chowdhari

[2] From the reference to the articles sent by the addressee having been received; *vide* the succeeding item.

[3] 1871-1940; British missionary; co-worker of Gandhiji and Tagore; honoured as "Deenabandhu", brother of the poor

[4] Of August 14; it read: "Arrived safely. My dearest love. Sending articles."

You will have to consider whether Benarsidas[1] and Vaze[2] should go to Malay States even though you have been.

I hope you have benefited by the change.

You need not worry about me. Things are topsy-turvy but I am quite happy and keeping fairly well.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

[PS.]

Please remember me to Gurudev. I hope he is quite well. Boro Dada[3] continues to send me messages.

From a photostat: G.N. 2638

27. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

August 25, 1924

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

What is this book by Mr. Oldham, *Christianity and the Race Problem*? K. T. Paul insists upon my securing a copy and reading it. If you recommend it, you should secure it for me.

I have read your article[4] on Burma. The thing is shocking but you have written it in a hurry. I observe that you have seen too much to enable you to analyse properly and trace causes. Moreover you have done what we accuse the globe-trotters of doing. Will you not "rest and be thankful" for a while? Work is prayer but it can also be madness. You were in fever when you wrote your Burmese article. I am printing it nevertheless because it comes from the utmost purity of your heart.

Only I lodge my protest against your doing things by the way.

[1] Chaturvedi; resigned from Chiefs' College, Indore, in July 1920; co-worker of Andrews at Shantiniketan and later, co-author of his biography

[2] S. A. Vaze, Secretary of the Imperial Citizenship Association

[3] Dwijendranath Tagore, elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore

[4] "Indian Labour in Burma" in *Young India*, 28-8-1924; it described the exploitation and criminal prosecution of Indian labourers by the recruiting contractors, the pitiable condition of women and overcrowding in ships.

With love deeper than even you can fathom,

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2612

28. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Sravana Krishna 11 [August 25, 1924]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I hope Father is better now. About Pandit Sunderlalji I have written[1] to you all that I could.

The solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem is becoming more difficult each day. My suggestion is the very basis of what you want. I think that if a thorough investigation into the Delhi riots could be made, it would help us to proceed further. I am convinced that ultimately some of the leaders will have to sacrifice their lives.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

137, CANNING STREET
CALCUTTA

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6034. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

29. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, AHMEDABAD[2]

[August 26, 1924][3]

The following rendering of Mr. Gandhi's speech in reply to the address of the Ahmedabad Municipality is given here as being of general interest:

Whilst I thank you for the beautiful address you have presented to me, I am painfully conscious of the fact that as a citizen of Ahmedabad I am utterly undeserving of it. In saying so I am not using the language of false or undue modesty. A citizen to deserve an address from the Municipality of his city should

[1] *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", 22-8-1924.
[2] At the Municipal Hall; Vallabhbhai Patel read out the address.
[3] From the Bombay Secret Abstracts

have special citizen-service to his credit. And I have none. I do not think it was at all necessary for you to vote this address for the services you have had in mind. But I know that I owe the address to the fact of many of you being my co-workers in another field and to the proverbial generosity of the nation to which you and I are proud to belong.

When in response to the invitation of some friends I fixed my abode in this city some years ago I thought I should contribute my share in the service of this city, and be worthy of calling myself its citizen. I had not then the privilege of knowing many of you, but I shared my dreams and visions with Dr. Hariprasad whom I often met. I used to tell him of the citizen-service I had done in South Africa—service which I am thankful was true service inasmuch as it was silent and of which most of you know nothing—and I concerted measures for improving the sanitation and health of the city. We had intended to form a committee of servants who would visit every nook and corner of the city in order to give the citizens object lessons in cleaning closets and streets and in general conservancy by doing the work ourselves. We had also intended to plan and suggest measures for the expansion of the city by opening suburbs and inviting citizens to go and settle there rather than live in congested areas. Such things we know could not be satisfactorily done by fresh taxation. We therefore thought of going with the beggar's bowl to the rich citizens and ask them to donate land in the heart of the city for opening little gardens for the children to play in. We had intended too to think out schemes so as to afford the fullest facility for the education of every child of Ahmedabad. It was also our intention to ensure a supply of pure and cheap milk by municipalizing all the city dairies. Mr. Jivanlal Desai[1] even suggested that I should enter the Municipality myself and endeavour to carry out the plans above adumbrated. But the fates willed it otherwise. A huge hurricane blew over the country in the shape of the Rowlatt Bills taking us all within its sweep. It took some lives both innocent and guilty. I had to do penance for my Himalayan miscalculation.[2] The hurricane still persists though in another shape. We are all trying, however inadequately, to stop it. And I at least feel I have not the leisure to work

[1] Barrister; public worker of Ahmedabad; helped Gandhiji in establishing the Satyagraha Ashram in 1915

[2] On April 14, 1919, Gandhiji decided to undergo a fast for three days; *vide* Vol. XV, p. 223.

out my schemes. But why should I pretend that I would have succeeded in carrying them out had I entered the Municipality? Why may I assume that none of your previous presidents or none of you thought or are thinking the same things as I? How dare I say that no efforts have been made in this direction? I may only say that my heart weeps to see the misery, the squalour, and the dirt in the streets of Ahmedabad as I pass through them. How can starvation and dirt be allowed to exist in a city of such riches and rich traditions?

But I may not pretend that I should have been able to remove all this, had I entered the Municipality. Possibly humiliation would have been in store for me in that field as it has been in others. It was perhaps well that Providence ordered things otherwise. As it is, however, even today I stand in the humiliating position of having no citizen-service to my credit, and yet stealing an address I do not deserve. I pray that the Almighty may have consideration for my good intention and forgive my failings. I ask you also to forgive me, and request you to have in mind the dream of an ideal city I have revealed to you. I thank you once again.

Young India, 28-8-1924

30. *LETTER TO ABDUL MAJID*

August 27, 1924

BHAI ABDUL MAJID[1],

I have your letter. Thanks. I have not forgotten you.

Yours,
GANDHI

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 6213

[1] Vice-chancellor of the National University at Aligarh

31. *NOTES*

Lord Lytton's Explanation

Lord Lytton's letter to the Poet in my opinion aggravates the insult His Excellency seeks to explain away. I hardly think that the fine grammatical distinction made by him in any way mends matters. No one, I am sure, thought that His Excellency had the women of India in general in his mind when he uttered the indiscreet words. The complaint is that he uttered the charge at all. When a responsible person makes any charge, there is always a double presumption. The one is that he has entirely satisfied himself about it and that he can prove it to the world. The other is that the evil which is the subject matter of the charge is fairly general. Apart from the police testimony, is His Excellency in a position to prove the charge to the satisfaction of the public, say to the satisfaction of the Poet? Does he not know that the police are thoroughly distrusted by the public? Does he not know that they are, so far as the public is concerned, as a rule in the defendant's box? Again assuming that the charge is true of some women and some men, is he in a position to prove that the evil is so general as to call for a public condemnation. Will a responsible Indian be justified in saying that some English civilians are guilty, say, of corruption and immorality, because to his knowledge a few rare cases have been so found? Will he not be indignantly called upon to name the parties and take them to a court of law and also to apologize to the civilians for turning what was a charge against particular individuals into a charge against a body? Will he be permitted to take shelter under the adjective, "some"? If Lord Lytton never intended to say more than that Indians contain among them degraded specimens of humanity as every other nation, where was the occasion for his complaint in a serious speech when he knew that every word of his speech would be scanned here and have due weight abroad. I cannot therefore help respectfully suggesting that if he did not mean to cast any aspersion on Indian womanhood and Indian manhood, he should unreservedly withdraw and apologize for the charge. He will thereby add to his dignity and even prestige. If on the other hand he has proofs of the kind I have suggested, he should bravely sustain the charge and place the proofs before the public. A lame explana-

tion is no explanation. It adds injury to insult.

A Badge of Subservience

Every Indian publicist knows that when a duty was placed on cotton goods imported, an excise cotton duty was placed on Indian production solely in the interest of Lancashire and it still remains in spite of protests and in spite even of promise that it would be reconsidered. This duty is a continuing reminder to us of the subordination of India's interest to England's. Some friends who only know my strong, indeed passionate, preference for hand-spun to the exclusion of mill-spun cannot understand my advocacy of preference for Indian mill-spun. A little reflection must however show the consistency between the two policies. Foreign cloth must be totally banished from the Indian market, if India is to become an economically free nation, if her peasantry is to be freed from chronic pauperism, if that peasantry is to find honourable employment during times of famine and such other visitations. Protection of her staple industry is her birthright. I would therefore protect the Indian miils against foreign competition even though for the time being it may result in mulcting the poor people. Such mulcting can take place only if the mill-owners be so unpatriotic as to raise prices owing to the monopoly they may secure. I have therefore no hesitation in advocating the repeal of cotton excise duties and imposition of a prohibitive import duty.

Similarly and consistently I would protect hand-spun khaddar against the home mills. And I know that if only foreign competition is avoided khaddar will be protected without difficulty. Foreign cloth will be banished when public opinion becomes effectively powerful. The same power will insure the protection of khaddar against mills. But my strong belief is that khaddar will come to its own without any unseemly war with the mills. But, whilst khaddar has only a limited number of votaries, they, the votaries, must necessarily preach khaddar in preference to and to the exclusion of yarn and cloth manufactured even in our mills. To give the option is to kill khaddar.

Mill Khadi

But says the impatient patriot, "Surely you can have no corner for the mills in your heart when the mill-owners do not hesitate even to palm off fraudulent imitations of khadi on the gullible public." I know this imitation khadi. I have purposely kept the precious samples in front of me in order to warn me of

my duty not to be angry against the mill-owners in question in spite of their unpatriotic conduct. I know that they could have conducted their trade without entering into competition with khadi. They could at least have refrained from miscalling their coarse cloth "khadi" when they well knew that "khadi" was a word used to signify hand-spun cotton cloth. But two wrongs cannot make one right. My satyagrahi spirit tells me that I may not retaliate. I may not imitate their unpatriotic conduct. I know that, if lovers of khadi remain true to their faith, hand-spun khadi will thrive against all odds. Non-co-operators must, therefore, irrespective of what some mills are wittingly or unwittingly doing to injure khadi, continue to advocate not only the repeal of cotton excise duty but advocate also full protection of that great industry.

Indians Overseas

I offer no apology for printing several contributions at a time from Mr. Andrews. They have all been received during the week. They give an indication of his burning love for India and his impatience of every wrong. These contributions give at a glance an idea of the uphill work that lies in front of us in connection with these countrymen of ours scattered in various parts of the world. The Natal ordinance that was forcing up its career even whilst Mrs. Naidu was in South Africa shows that we have to follow up her valuable work. The betrayal both of the Africans and the Indians in Kenya makes the wrong almost too prodigious for poor India to deal with. The hideous immorality of the system under which our countrymen emigrate to Burma shows the necessity of eternal vigilance. In the palmy days of my third class travelling, I was an eyewitness of what was then possible in the deck passenger traffic between Calcutta and Burma. I then described the conditions of deck passengers as inhuman. I understood then that it was much worse between Madras and Rangoon. The cause was the insatiable greed of the steamship company that permitted the filth and the degradation that went on with its knowledge and connivance. It is difficult to distribute the blame, whether the Government that permits the company to conduct its service in utter neglect of the health and moral well-being of deck passengers or the company that perpetrates the wrong or the passengers who for the sake of earning a living abroad are content to wallow in dirt both physical and moral are the greatest sinners. Mr. Andrews says in a private letter that he hopes to see before long a decided improvement in the

condition of the deck passenger traffic. Let us hope that this good Englishman's hope will be fulfilled.[1]

PLEASE NOTE

The secretary, A.I.K.B., sends the following for the benefit of all concerned:

> 1. Most of the members who sent in their yarn have not given their register numbers. This may probably be due to the fact that the Provincial Khadi Boards have not been able to intimate each member of his register number.
>
> 2. Added to the above is the difficulty of finding out the members' names in registers where no alphabetical index is provided. Few provinces have carried out the instruction in the matter of the index asked for. Where members give no register numbers the absence of an alphabetical index makes it well-nigh impossible to proceed with the sorting.
>
> 3. Members and non-members have directly sent their yarn to this office contrary to instructions. They should be told in future to send their contributions to the provinces whether members or non-members.
>
> 4. The length of the yarn in most cases is unmeasured. The provincial secretary before despatching the parcel should see that every yarn contribution is properly labelled and described.

Implicit obedience to instructions alone can make the organization of spinning effective and successful. I hope therefore that next month there will be complete adherence to the instructions issued by the A.I.K.B. from time to time.

Young India, 28-8-1924

32. *GULBARGA GONE MAD*

I hinted last week[2] that there was evidently an organization at the back of the mania for desecrating Hindu temples. Gulbarga is the latest instance in point. Whatever the Hindu provoccation, if there was any, the Mussalman outburst has an ominous look about it. The desecration of temples cannot be justified in any circumstance whatsoever. Maulana Shaukat Ali when he heard of Shambhar and Amethi desecrations exclaimed in a fit of temper that the Mussalmans should not be surprised if the Hindus retaliate and some day find that their mosques have been

[1] For a gist of Andrews' article, *vide* footnote to "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 25-8-1924.

[2] *Vide* "Notes", 21-8-1924, under the sub-title, "Wanton Desecration".

desecrated. The Hindus may feel flattered or pleased over the Maulana's indignant exclamation. But I do not and I advise the Hindus not to be. Let them understand that I feel, perhaps more keenly than most of them, every fanatic outburst on the part of Mussalmans. I am fully aware of my responsibility in the matter. I know that many Hindus feel that I am responsible for many of these outbursts. For, they argue, I contributed the largest share to the awakening of the Mussalman masses. I appreciate the charge. Though I do not repent of my contribution, I feel the force of the objection. Therefore, if for no other reason, for this at least of greater responsibility, I must feel, more keenly than most Hindus can, these desecrations. I am both an idolater and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true sense of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. My alliance with the Mussalmans presupposes their perfect tolerance for my idols and my temples. I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the Deity save one's own. This form of idolatry is more deadly for being more fine and evasive than the tangible and gross form of worship that identifies the Deity with a little bit of a stone or a golden image.

True Hindu-Muslim unity requires Mussalmans to tolerate not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as part of their religion, the religion of others so long as they, the latter, believe it to be true. Even so is it expected of Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of others, no matter how repugnant they may appear to their, the Hindus', sense of religion. The Hindus must therefore reject the idea of retaliation. The law of retaliation we have been trying since the day of Adam and we know from experience that it has hopelessly failed. We are groaning under its poisonous effect. Above all the Hindus may not break mosques against temples. That way lies slavery and worse. Even though a thousand temples may be reduced to bits, I would not touch a single mosque and expect thus to prove the superiority of my faith to the so-called faith of fanatics. I would love to hear of priests dying at their posts in defence of their temples and their idols. Let them learn to suffer and to die in the defence of their temples even as God allows Himself to be insulted and broken up in the insult

and damage done to the idols in which being omnipresent He undoubtedly resides. Hindus will not defend their religion or their temples by seeking to destroy mosques and thus proving themselves as fanatical as the fanatics who have been desecrating temples.

To the unknown Mussalmans who are undoubtedly behind these desecrations I submit:

Remember that Islam is being judged by your conduct. I have not found a single Mussalman defending these outbursts not even under provocation. There seems to me to have been little if any provocation offered by the Hindus. But let us assume that it was otherwise, that Hindus played music near mosques to exasperate Mussalmans, that they even removed a stone from a minaret. Yet I venture to say that Mussalmans ought not to have desecrated Hindu temples. Even retaliation has its limits. Hindus prize their temples above their lives. It is possible to contemplate with some degree of equanimity injury to life but not to temples. Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to every man even if it stands low in the scales of philosophic comparison. But presumption is against such Hindu provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article[1] on Hindu-Muslim tension. I have failed to receive any proof in support of them. You will not enhance the reputation of Islam by the acts reported about Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga. If you will permit me to say so, I feel about the honour of Islam as much as I feel about my own religion. This I do because I desire to live in perfect, open and hearty friendship with Mussalmans. I cannot help saying that these desecrations are cutting a deep wound in my heart.

To the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi, I say:

Yours is a golden opportunity, if you desire amity between the two communities. In the light of what seems to have happened at Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga, it is doubly your duty to solve the question. You have had the rare good fortune of having amongst you two Mussalmans, Hakim Sahib Ajmal Khan[2] and Dr. Ansari[3], who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of both the

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIV, pp. 136-54.

[2] 1865-1927; Muslim physician and politician; took a leading part in the Khilafat movement; president, Indian National Congress, 1921-22

[3] Dr. M. A. Ansari (1880-1936); nationalist Muslim leader; President of the Indian Muslim League, 1920, and of the Indian National Congress, 1927

communities. You have therefore noble traditions behind you. You can turn your quarrels to good account by closing the ranks and establishing a heart-friendship that will not break under any strain whatsoever. I have placed my services at your disposal. If you will have me to act as a mediator between you, I am prepared to bury myself in Delhi and, in collaboration with any others whom you may appoint, endeavour to find out the true facts. An authentic story of the events of July last and the circumstances that led to them is a necessary preliminary to a lasting solution. I ask you to come to a decision quickly. The Hindu-Muslim question is the question on a proper solution of which hangs the destiny of India in the immediate future. Delhi can solve the question, for the others are likely to follow what Delhi might do.

Young India, 28-8-1924

33. A STUDY IN FIGURES

Here is what may be regarded as the final list of yarn returns for the month ending 15th instant. The list is made up from returns up to 25th instant. All the yarn hereafter received must be carried to the second month's account.

Name of province	Number of representatives	Member spinners	Non-member spinners	Total spinners
Andhra	1653	302	127	429
Assam	250	34	2	36
Ajmer	57	9	6	15
Bombay	242	64	21	85
Burma	36	1	1	2
Bihar	1074	174	34	208
Bengal	1549	401	43	444
Berar	255	1	—	1
C. P. Marathi	942	44	23	67
C. P. Hindi	1324	66	5	71
Delhi	185	6	6	12
Gujarat	408	177	668	845
*Karnatak	163	23	18	41
Kerala	53	2	—	2
Maharashtra	674	137	25	162

*Punjab	255	23	—	23
*Sindh	262	36	12	48
*Tamilnad	826	79	11	90
United Provinces	1581	135	27	162
Utkal	413	32	5	37
Grand Total	12202[1]	1746	1034	2780

*Registers are incomplete.

The percentage of members complying with the resolution is only 14 per cent of the names on the register. The non-members to send their yarn are over 67 per cent of the spinning members. Apologies for poor returns have been received from almost all the provinces. They expect to show much better results next month. It is no wonder that Gujarat stands easily first on the list. It has the best organization and facilities for learning and practising the art of spinning. Berar stands lowest on the list. I was hoping to be able to congratulate Berar and its spirit of obedience in spite of its disbelief in the efficacy of spinning. I invite the Berar Congress Committee to play the game. And are there no non-members in Berar who believe in spinning? It is worthy of note that Bengal stands next to Gujarat and bids fair to outdo the latter as it ought. Bengal was the home of the finest spinners the world has ever produced. Bengal felt the full force of the cruel hand of the East India Company. Nothing therefore can be more appropriate than that Bengal should lead the way in giving India the largest number of volunteer spinners. The secret of Bengal being next to Gujarat is again its organization created by Dr. Ray. The workers are willing if the leaders will lead. I hope next week to give an analysis of the quality of yarn received. Suffice it to say for the present that if the response continues we are likely to solve the problem of getting fine counts capable of being woven without difficulty. This has been one of the greatest difficulties in the way of khaddar propaganda.

Young India, 28-8-1924

[1] The source has "11302".

34. *TWO SIDES*

The spinning resolution is proving a remarkable study in the mentality of Congressmen. It required a resolution of the A.I.C.C. to make Congressmen understand that for hand-spinning to be universal, it was the duty of at least Congress representatives not only to learn but to practise spinning. They have now begun to see the force of it. Till now, in spite of an earlier resolution of the A.I.C.C. that all such Congressmen should at least learn the art, the majority had not even touched the wheel.

No wonder that spinning has not made enough progress for bringing about an effective boycott of foreign cloth. Now however men who had thought they would never be able to spin have not only begun to do so but have also begun to like it. Here is an extract from a letter:

> I was late in sitting to work. Some more days were taken up in collecting material. Then for a few days more I kept quarrelling with my tools, thus showing the kind of workman that I am. When the wheel became amenable to reason, the slivers revolted. The silly things refused to yield thread but seemed to have no objection to let out the whole of themselves at a bound. It appeared to me that it was much easier to spin fine speculative thread from a chair of philosophy than to turn out real live yarn from a spinning-wheel. If I had realized that the mischievous Mahatma had this trouble in store for us, I would have thought a hundred times before non-co-operating with my comfortable chair at the college at his call in 1921. I had thought then that as a leader I would have the privilege of descanting upon spinning from a hundred platforms and not have to practise it. I have been rudely disillusioned. Well, I accept the inevitable as retreat now is out of the question. I send you the result of my labours, poor as it is. The conditions laid down have not in a single point been fulfilled. But I can assure you my heart has not failed and I yet hope to show very creditable results.

I can multiply such instances of late, though zealous, response.

But the reader should know the other side also. Here is a free translation of the only letter of its kind received from the president of a subordinate Congress Committee. He says:

> I regard as improper this resolution of the A.I.C.C. Today it is the spinning-wheel or the resignation. Tomorrow it may be "cook your own meal or resign", or it may be "shave your heads clean or resign".

> I distrust the philosophy of the charkha. I distrust its advantages. In short I distrust it just as much as Mahatma Gandhi trusts it. It is his hobby. I am not going to submit to the resolution nor am I going to resign. Let the committee expel me.

To belong to an institution is no joke. To be its president is a serious thing. This gentleman has been probably giving his vote in favour of the wheel every time votes have been taken. But now that it has reached the testing stage, he proclaims his disbelief from the housetop. Better late than never. I therefore congratulate him on the courage of his convictions, but I am afraid I cannot put up his disobedience as an example worthy of imitation. No organization can be run with success if its members, especially its officers, refuse to carry out its policy and hold on to it in spite of opposition to it. For winning swaraj one requires iron discipline. Let this friend and those who think with him realize that we are engaged in the very difficult and delicate task of wresting authority from an organization whose members are able, industrious, intelligent, brave and above all trained in habits of exact discipline. Assuming that we desire a bloodless victory, I respectfully suggest to the friend that even though the charkha may be useless for the purpose intended, its value is inestimable as a measure of discipline. I suggest to him that as a measure of discipline it would not be a worthless idea, even that of requiring everyone to cook for himself, or to shave himself clean. Such tests, ridiculous though they may otherwise appear to be, have a value all their own for they give the measure of obedience evoked. All protest before the passing of such measures is legitimate and sometimes obligatory. After the passing there can be no room for reasoning. Willing and complete obedience or resignation is an absolute duty on the part of members.

Young India, 28-8-1924

35. SOUTH INDIA FLOOD RELIEF

The response to the appeal on behalf of the afflicted people of the South continues to be satisfactory both in cash and in cloth which is daily accumulating. But the most satisfactory feature of the response is the way in which the poor people are coming forward to help. Untouchables have come forward with their liberal help. I have before me a touching letter in which a whole family of them have sent monies saved out of their special self-denial. The teachers and the boys of the Proprietary High School have sent Rs. 720. The Mahavidyalaya has collected Rs. 500 of which Rs. 200 they have spent in buying khaddar for the naked. I am sure that the knowledge of such donations will bring true comfort to our distressed countrymen. I hope the workers will remember that nature has made no distinction between Mussalman and Hindu, Christian and Jew and that they too will make no such distinction. We may not mind all the denominations giving relief through their respective organizations, but it will be unbearable if they confine relief only to their own flock.

Young India, 28-8-1924

36. SPEECH IN REPLY TO CORPORATION ADDRESS, BOMBAY[1]

August 29, 1924

MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I need offer no apology for my having addressed you first in my mother tongue. But as Bombay is an essentially cosmopolitan city, it is but meet that I should give you the substance of my reply in English also.

I thank you for this address and the sentiments expressed therein. You have emphasized what may be called my humanitarian services. For me humanitarian service, or rather service of all that lives, is religion. And I draw no distinction between such

[1] At Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall. The address expressed satisfaction at Gandhiji's recovery from illness and referred to his invaluable services.

religion and politics. Indeed I cannot conceive a life of full service without its touching politics. I am endeavouring to prove by my experiment that politics without a religious backing is a dangerous pastime resulting in nothing but harm to individuals and nations indulging in them.

But I see that my attempt to introduce religion, as here defined, into our political life, has frightened some of my best friends and co-workers. I am between Scylla and Charybdis. Whilst these friends fear my attempt to treat politics in terms of religion, another group would have me to restrict myself to what they imagine is social service. But if I have faith in my mission I must stand unmoved. I believe that the time is fast coming when politicians will cease to fear the religion of humanity and humanitarians will find entrance into political life indispensable for full service. Hence it is that I am inviting all India to respond to the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar and to promote the establishment of heart-unity between Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, Jews and others who vainly consider that the God of each is different from the God of the rest. Hence also do I feel that for Hindus it is irreligion to treat any body of men and women as untouchables by reason of birth. These things I hold to be as much politics as they are undoubtedly humanitarian service of the highest type. The best manner then in which I can return my thanks for your address is to invite you to join me and help me in that work and justify your title to be called the premier Corporation in India.

The Bombay Chronicle, 30-8-1924

37. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

BOMBAY,
August 30, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

Mrs. Naidu handed me yesterday, your letter[1] to me. The original must have reached Sabarmati by now. I made a full surrender, i.e., as full as I am capable of making, in my two letters[2] to you . . .[3]

You will have me therefore almost on your terms. The "almost" is necessary because there are some few things I hold dearer than life and than all the ties of the world. But if you

[1] Of August 25, 1924
[2] Of August 9 and 15; *vide* Vol. XXIV.
[3] As in the source

will let me have something willingly and whole-heartedly, i.e., knowing that it is right to give, then I want this:

Our resolution should

1. reiterate the Congress belief in the principle and policy of full non-co-operation including the boycott of legislative bodies;

2. but suspend them [boycotts] all save that of foreign cloth up to the end of 1925;

3. should invite everybody to join the Congress;

4. should exclude the boycott of Empire goods;

5. and should confine Congress activity solely to the spread of hand-spinning and hand-spun khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity, and for Hindus the removal of untouchability.

This means that Congress as such should have nothing to do either with Councils or boycotts but they may form their own organizations independently of the Congress to go on with Councils and other activities not inconsistent with the Congress activity. Therefore there can be no organization to prosecute the Council or other boycotts suspended under the resolution. Support of the existing national schools should continue and where possible new ones may be opened but they may not have any connection with the Government.

The four-anna franchise should be abolished and instead each person becoming a member of a Congress organization should be a khaddar-wearer, should contribute per month as a condition of membership at least two thousand yards of yarn of his own spinning, it being open to everyone to contribute the full quota for the whole year at a time.

I see no other way of making the Congress organization a real and living thing, nor can I see any hope for the poor of India without the spinning-wheel and we shall never fire their imagination unless we spin ourselves.

There are other alterations I should suggest in the Constitution but they need not be mentioned now. They are meant purely for effective and expeditious working. We should have a declaration that the Working Committees should be regarded as executive bodies and the A.I.C.C. a deliberative body and that should contain only those who are committed to the full programme of the Congress. But under my proposal you would be as eligible for election to the Working Committee as I. What I mean is that if the four boycotts are suspended Council-entry or practice in a law-court should by itself be no bar. As a matter of fact it may be inadvisable for a busy lawyer or a busy Councillor to come into Working Committee whose members would be expected to give their whole time and

attention to the three things of the Congress programme.

Under my plan again there should be no exception in favour of Bengal.[1] As a matter of fact Swarajists may organize themselves fully in every province without let or hindrance from the Congress. But the Congress organization everywhere should have only one programme. Thus Das[2] may convert the Congress organization into a Swaraj organization and form himself and permit others to form a Congress organization pledged only to the three things. The idea is this: The Congress will neither help nor hinder other organizations but the latter should *all*, if their members are Congressmen, help the Congress programme. Conversely, Congressmen who believe in many other things not prohibited by the Congress may join other organizations for their other activities. . . .

Of the business part as far as I can see only the qualifications of membership may prove an obstacle but I hope you will see that if *we all* believe in khaddar even as an economic necessity, the acceptance of my proposition is a necessity.

You will observe that I have written the letter as the thoughts have come to me. I do not mind for my sake, as I wish, to live upon your sufferance. No more of domestic wrangling for me.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 10140

38. STATEMENT ON NATIONAL UNITY

August 31, 1924

New India writes: "Mr. Gandhi made a statement on August 31, published on September 1, which ran as follows:"

I have resolved that there should be no opposition from me either at the Belgaum Congress or before that, so as to divide the country. I have already told Pandit Motilal Nehru that my attitude was that of perfect surrender, because we have become a house completely divided. Without anger or hatred, we must make Herculean efforts to get out of that condition, and the country could work, not for her own good only, but for the good of humanity.

With the exception of some details as to the "surrender", to be published when a few people who have the right to be consulted

[1] As proposed by Motilal Nehru in his letter

[2] C. R. Das (1870-1925); President, Indian National Congress, 1922; founded the Swaraj Party in 1923

have been invited to concur, the nature of the main agreement at which we arrived is indicated in what is said above. The spirit of us both is that we love India more than our own methods, and that we believe that India's freedom is necessary for human progress.

The Bombay Chronicle, 6-9-1924

39. SPEECH AT EXCELSIOR THEATRE, BOMBAY[1]

August 31, 1924

We have spoken so much today that it would not, I feel, be wrong if in deference to Sarojini Devi's advice I hold my tongue. There is, however, one difficulty in doing so. I have left my weapon at home. If I had brought it, I would have given you an object lesson and asked you to take a wheel and start spinning along with me.

I had no idea that I would receive this advice today from Sarojini Devi, or that it would be my lot to listen to so much praise. I am tired of listening to praise. Believe me when I say that I do not like this praise. But I shall not say more on this subject just now. I shall only say that I feel bound to those who have praised me and I request them all, as did Shri Jayakar, to help me by their silence. I shall be able to take up heavy responsibilities if I have your silent support.

Before I say something, I wish to elicit atonement from one or two persons. Before we attend any meeting, we must learn good manners. We should know and respect the disposition of our guest. If you cannot do this, it is better that you do not attend the meeting. Two or three persons have violated this etiquette of a meeting. What Bhai Jamnadas[2] said was literally true. Much dirty work has been done in the shadow of 'Mahatma'. The word 'Mahatma' stinks in my nostrils; and, in addition to that, when somebody insists that everyone must call me 'Mahatma' I get nausea, I do not wish to live. Had I not known that the more I insist on the word 'Mahatma' not being used, the more does it come into vogue, I would most certainly have insisted. In the Ashram where I live, every child, brother and sister has orders not to use the word 'Mahatma'. None should refer to me as

[1] Under the auspices of the Parsi Rajakiya Mandal to honour Gandhiji and to raise money for Malabar Flood Relief Fund; M. R. Jayakar presided.

[1] Jamnadas Dwarakadas, a leading member of the Home Rule League

'Mahatma' even in writings. I should be referred to as Gandhi or Gandhiji. Those who heckled Bhai Jamnadas have insulted me, have violated peace. Ours is a peaceful struggle. There can be no peace without modesty. Peace devoid of modesty is lifeless. We are worshippers of the life-force; and living peace consists of modesty and discretion. I would therefore advise those who heckled Jamnadas to apologize. Jamnadas paid me high tributes, but even if he had said that there is no man as pernicious as Gandhi—and anyone who thinks it has a right to say it—nobody has a right to obstruct him, he should be listened to with respect.

On hearing this, a gentleman from the first gallery opposite rose and bowed down with folded hands. Gandhiji said:

That is enough. But there are yet one or two persons in the upper gallery. Will they not apologize? Those who do not apologize, I would say, are unfit for swaraj.

Voices were raised: "Stand up and apologize." Two persons stood up and apologized. Gandhiji was pleased; and as he started speaking, the last remaining person stood up and apologized.

I would now ask everyone to avoid this error. There are as many minds as there are men. How will things proceed if we do not tolerate one another? Hindus cannot tolerate Muslims and Muslims reciprocate the feeling and temples are destroyed. If both learn tolerance, all disputes will end. All should practise tolerance throughout their lives. Once this attitude spreads, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis will all tolerate opposition. The greatest obstacle in the way of our progress is intolerance. I am trying to overcome it. I am a small man; I am no superman. Had I been a superman, I would have eliminated intolerance. I have yet to acquire purity, love, humility and discrimination; otherwise you would have noted a spark in my eyes, a fire in my words, which would have instantly convinced you that such is not the way of peaceful non-co-operation. I have said before, "Dyer is not our enemy, nor O'Dwyer; you must not look upon them as enemies. Be kind to those who have been hostile to you." If then we are expected not to insult them, how can we insult Jamnadas? If a guest comes to us, we honour him by offering him a seat next to us, asking our own kith and kin to make room for him. If Jamnadas is our opponent, he is a guest, and therefore he should not be insulted. If he is our brother, there can be no question of insulting him.

I was very sorry when you showed disrespect to Jamnadas; but that sorrow has been turned into happiness because you have

very humbly apologized for it. This has pleased me very much. It will, of course, do good to those who apologized; but it will also do good to us who witnessed the sight. I do not want to raise the issue of Councils here, but, with due apologies to Bhai Jayakar[1], I would submit that such a sight could not be witnessed in the Councils. In this atonement I see the roots of true freedom.

It would not have mattered if Shri Devdhar[2] had not mentioned Malabar; because we have gathered today to honour none else than the brothers and sisters from Malabar. You have made up the Fund through your donations—small or large. Shri Devdhar's speech had a double purpose. He demanded from you further acts of selflessness, and I need not say that I am one with him there. The readers of *Young India* and *Navajivan* know that I ask even children what they would do when their own brothers or sisters are starving. Would you not give them a share of your food and clothes? You should eat less, wear fewer clothes and give a share for Malabar. I seek such charity from you. I am often asked whether or not such charity is well directed. This criticism is both proper and improper. There can be no irregularity where Shri Devdhar is concerned. On many matters his opinions and mine differ very widely. I do not at all like many of his views; but there is absolutely no doubt about his purity. Whenever I went to his austere home I felt that it was the tabernacle of the spirit. This brother of ours goes to wild forests, faces extreme heat and cold, puts up with unwholesome climate or surroundings —all for the sake of selfless service. How can we fail to help such a man?

Well, when such a one speaks against the spinning-wheel, I say, "Do not listen to him."

India expects many things from me. I am expected to chalk out a path at Belgaum, which will unite all people or make them tolerant of the opposite views. I cannot deceive myself. I do not believe that I am worthy of all the praise that was showered on me. The praise only indicates that people expect great things of me. Great love, great sacrifice and great service are expected of me. How can I fulfil these expectations? My body has become weak on account of my sins. A man does not become ill without sin. God has given a body for us to keep in good trim. Sin consists in conscious or unconscious breach of divine or natural law. One is

[1] M. R. Jayakar (1873-1959); Liberal leader, Judge, Federal Court of India, 1937

[2] G. K. Devdhar (1879-1935); member and later President, Servants of of India Society

punished for an unconscious violation of a king's command. How, then, can the breach of natural law escape punishment? A thief is not pardoned. If a crime is committed in ignorance, the punishment may be reduced; that is the only difference. I have become ill on account of the sins that I have committed. As long as I commit such sins, consciously or unconsciously, I am an imperfect man. How should an imperfect man advise others? I am therefore in a great fix. Moreover, I do not have any other weapon. Satyagraha is my only weapon. Till now I have placed before the country the aggressive aspect of satyagraha. Henceforth I intend to present only its peaceful, winsome and profound aspect. If this can be accepted, our victory is certain. I think I have mastered the technique of satyagraha. I have a fear that India, in the present circumstances, cannot wield the aggressive form of satyagraha. We can do a lot of work before the Belgaum session by a deliberate adoption of the peaceful path. Co-operators, Non-co-operators, staunch No-changers, Pro-changers, Swarajists, Liberals, Conventionists, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Jews, all can join together in this work. Satyagraha does not mean mere civil disobedience.

I have offered many suggestions to Pandit Motilalji; I did so only yesterday. All people know how close I am to Panditji. I have opened out my heart in a letter that I wrote to him yesterday; because if I can persuade him I shall be able to persuade others. The scholarly Mrs. Besant[1] had come to see me yesterday. I explained the same thing to her also. In view of her hoary age and mature experience, I placed my views before her like a son pleading before his mother. I am going to explain my views to Shri Shastriar[2] with the same humility. I would make them equally clear to English people. We would stand to gain directly, if all these people understand the position. I would not discuss it here in detail. You should presume that it includes the spinning-wheel. In all my plans, the wheel must find a place somewhere or other. I cannot survive without it, nor can India. I believe the moment has arrived when even you cannot dispense with it.

You regard me as a Mahatma, not because of my Truth, nor for my Non-violence, but on account of my deep attachment for the poorest of the poor. Whatever happens, I can never desert

[1] Annie Besant (1847-1933); President of the Theosophical Society; President, Indian National Congress, 1917

[2] V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946); scholar and statesman; was President of the Servants of India Society

the poor in their rags. That is why you feel that Gandhi counts for something. I would, therefore, tell Ratansi, Jamnadas, Pickthall, Jayakar and all others that if they love me they should strive and ensure food and raiment for the villagers whom I love—you must devote yourself to the service of these poor people. How would you serve them? I shall tell you that. Not by a cold-hearted counting of beads. Such counting does not lead to liberation but to degradation, because one who is turning the rosary outwardly is sharpening a dagger inside his heart. I do concede that my heart may be impure even while plying the spinning-wheel, but the product of spinning is not lost even if the heart is impure. I may tell you that I chant the name of God when I spin for the sake of the children of the poor in India. I ask you to do the same. This may prove wrong. Economists may tell us in the future that we were mistaken, but they will have to accept that there was some gain even in this error; because it yielded some yarn at least and increased the quantity of cloth in the country. I consider myself a disciple of Sir Dinshaw Wachha[1]. He has said that Indians need 13.5 yards of cloth a head; and they get 9.5 yards. It is therefore necessary to produce 4 yards a head more. If everyone of you spins 100 yards of yarn every day, what will it amount to? The proverb, "The more the strands, the stronger the rope", is significant. If all of you start spinning, your yarn will cover and bind the whole of India. I have an unwavering faith that once you start spinning you will say that Gandhi had spoken the truth.

I am convinced that the sole cause for your love for me is that I have identified myself with the poor. I can become a *Bhangi* in the company of a *Bhangi* and I can do the work of a *Dhed* along with a *Dhed*. If untouchability is not eradicated during my lifetime and if I am to take another birth, I wish to be born a *Bhangi*. If untouchability persists and if I have the strength to abandon the Hindu religion, I shall read *Kalma* or become a Christian. I have, however, such great faith in my religion that I must live and die in it. For this reason also, I would wish to be born a *Bhangi* were I to be re-born. If you have any sympathy for *Bhangis* or *Dheds* or the poor in Orissa, you should forget foreign and mill-made cloth and wear cloth woven by the *Dheds* from yarn spun by the poor. How can they provide us the cloth of our choice? They are a humble, frightened folk. Many a sister in Kathiawar does not earn even an anna or two at the end of a day's labour.

[1] 1844-1936; Parsi statesman; President, Indian National Congress, 1901

They were given the spinning-wheel and a little money started trickling in. Today their spinning-wheels have ceased plying. They have, therefore, to groan for a few coins. There are many sisters like these. If I can tell them that even men and women like Jayakar, Sarojini, Mrs. Besant, the grand-daughter of Dadabhai[1], Shastriar, and so on spin, I shall not be ashamed of going back to them and making them spin again.

I do not wish to open free kitchens in India; on the contrary, I want to close them. I look upon free kitchens as black blots on our face. Hence I wish to make everyone self-reliant. I would not give a few coins to these women as charity, but would make them self-reliant. You should perform a sacrifice if you wish to make these sisters, other poor people and *Dheds* and *Bhangis* self-reliant. Let everyone contribute 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn. Then I shall deliver swaraj within one year.

But please understand me. I am not talking of a time limit. I am not saying that swaraj will be secured if you alone spin. I am positively asserting that swaraj will be secured if everyone spins. It is certain that if you start spinning, you will thereby make others spin. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that masses follow the elite. It is said that the Prince of Wales sets the fashion in dress. You are considered or wish to be considered the elite of India. Would the others not follow if you set the pace?

I shall, however, not pursue this argument. Whether swaraj is attainable through your spinning or not, if you have a fellow-feeling for the beggar, I shall request you to spin out of sympathy for him. You should identify yourself with the beggar and develop a bond of sympathy for him. Mirabai[2] has chanted:

> God has bound me with a string of yarn,
> I am a puppet in His hands,
> I have been stabbed with the dagger of love.

If you have such love for millions of your brothers and sisters, you should all tie yourselves up with a string of yarn. I know only this economics and nothing else.

I would refer to another matter. You must have heard news of the riots at Nagpur. The minds of Hindus as well as Muslims are rankling. How can I offer them anything else than my three-

[1] Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917); President, Indian National Congress, 1886, 1893 and 1906

[2] Medieval saint-poetess of Rajasthan; queen of Mewar; she spent her days in devotion to Shri Krishna, incurring her husband's displeasure.

fold programme? You must observe these three items during the current peaceful experiment with satyagraha. If all of you remember this, I am confident, we can all stand together on a single platform. Let us put aside the issues of boycotting courts, Councils, etc. We cannot all agree on them, but let us stand together on such issues as we agree on.

Then Gandhiji briefly repeated the same ideas for the sake of that section of the audience which did not know Gujarati. The ideas were the same; but there was something new too.

I have given vent to all that was seething in my heart. I am now too tired to say anything more. I have said many things. The gist of it is that my nature has two sides—a severe and a mild side. The severe or the fierce phase has estranged many of my friends. My wife, my son, my departed brother were alienated from me. In the other phase, love appears on the surface itself; but in the former phase of the mind, the love has to be looked for. There are other people as sternly self-critical as myself. I am convinced that when I am severe, there is not a trace of hatred within me and yet that severe phase is capable of leading to a fearful Himalayan blunder. However, students of psychology say that both the phases of the mind arise out of the same cause. Excessive love can assume a fierce face. If I torture my wife, it hurts me more. If I caused pain to any Englishman with whom I was working day and night in South Africa, I suffered greater pain during the process. If Englishmen have been hurt by my present activities, my sorrow is the greater.

It is not as if I love Englishmen the less; I love them as much as my kith and kin. That is why I say to them: "You have exploited us for long and continue to do so. You are, however, not aware of your sin. You are terrorizing us. You will repent." I had to assume a fierce attitude in order to awaken England. But now that fierce phase is over. I have told Motilalji that there is no fight left in me. I have laid down my arms. How can a divided house, where hatred and bitterness are rife, do anything else? I have to make Herculean efforts to improve the situation. At the Belgaum session or before it, I shall oppose nothing and no one in a manner that will create divisions in the country. I shall confess that I am defeated, I shall be humble and hope to unite all through my humility. If India abandons her stupor and secures her freedom in this manner, humanity will learn a lesson from it. What more should I say? I pray to God that He may lead me on the right path, remove any trace of hostility, hatred or anger that may be

left in me and give me a message which will inspire and rouse everybody to action.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-9-1924

40. SPEECH AT PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

August 31, 1924

In the circumstances, those who doubt the power of the spinning-wheel to gain freedom must argue against it when there is a resolution in its favour; but if they fail to win a majority, they should respect the verdict of the majority. If, however, someone is opposed to spinning on principle, he should leave the Congress—that is the path of justice, modesty and discretion.

I shall not answer today the many other doubts. I am engaged in consultations and you will get the answers before long. My watch runs fast, yours crawls. But I must take you with me as I run, and I am a lover of work whether you call me a Swarajist or a No-changer. I shall therefore find some way out. Till then I would advise you to bend your neck and spin.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-9-1924

41. LETTER TO SECRETARY, SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, VYKOM[2]

[*September 1, 1924*][3]

DEAR FRIENDS,

I thank you and all the friends for the gift of precious yarn. May God bless your efforts. You must strive unto death.[4]

The Hindu, 4-9-1924

[1] In reply to criticism of the Ahmedabad Resolution on spinning
[2] Acknowledging receipt of the quota of yarn sent by the inmates
[3] Released by the Associated Press of India on this date
[4] In the Vykom satyagraha

42. LETTER TO SHWAIB QURESHI

September 1, 1924

MY DEAR SHWAIB[1],

I had hoped to have a long chat with you yesterday but that was not to be.

Take care of Kristodas. God take care of both of you.

You must not pay the railway fare. Please let the account at my disposal pay for it.

Of course you will not resist Hyderabad authorities in any way. Ours is not a public inquiry. Indeed not an inquiry at all in the proper sense of the term. It is merely gathering information for my sake.

You will see all parties who will permit themselves to be seen by you including officials and *vakeels* for both parties. If you can bring photographs please bring.

After you have seen everything, I suggest each of you writing out your own impressions and then comparing them and evolving an agreed report or statement.

Kristodas tells me you are sad and despondent. How can that be? You have abundant faith in God. He cares for the least of His creatures. Why then should they care at all? Is it not enough that we do His will, as we know it, and be cheerful?

Yours,

M. K. G.

From a photostat: G.N. 5600

43. LETTER TO GENERAL TRAFFIC MANAGER, BOMBAY

[On or after *September 1, 1924*]

SIR,

The T.M., Ajmer, informs me[2] that my letter of 18th ultimo was transferred to your office. I shall thank you to favour me with an early reply.

From a photostat: S.N. 10120

[1] Editor, *New Era*; also of *Young India* during Gandhiji's imprisonment in 1922

[2] In his letter of August 23, 1924

44. *LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU*

BOMBAY,
September 2 [1924]

DEAR MOTILALJI,

This is again early morning after prayer. I hope you received my long letter. I expect a wire[1] from you. I was unable to revise it. I cannot now recall the exact wording of the personal part. After all, Mrs. Naidu did not read it as the letter was posted before she could read it. But the business part, of which I have a copy, she and many others have read.

This letter like the former is meant to be a plea for Jawaharlal. He is one of the loneliest young men of my acquaintance in India. The idea of your mental desertion of him hurts me. Physical desertion I hold to be impossible. Needless to say Manzar Ali and I often talked of the Nehrus whilst we were together at Yeravda. He said once that if there was one thing for which you lived more than any other, it was for Jawahar. His remark seemed to be so true. I don't want to be the cause direct or indirect of the slightest breach in that wonderful affection.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10146

45. *LETTER TO A FRIEND*

[*September 2, 1924*][2]

DEAREST FRIEND,

Though we rarely write to each other and rarely meet, you are what I have described you.

I am sick of the domestic fight that is raging in the country. I have therefore entirely capitulated. I do not want to be in the Congress if I must be without all old friends. I have talked to Mrs. Besant. I am in correspondence with Pandit Motilalji and

[1] *Vide* footnote to "Telegram to Motilal Nehru", on or after 2-9-1924.

[2] This letter appears to have been written at the same time as the preceding letter. They are typed on the same sheet. The addressee's name, however, is not available.

now I am putting myself in touch with you. Shall the spinning-wheel be the only bar? Will you not wear khaddar and take the spinning-wheel yourself for the sake of the poor and the down-trodden of India? Unless you are opposed to it as a matter of principle, I want you to consider my proposition seriously enough!

I hope you are keeping well. Please reply at Sabarmati.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10146 A

46. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

Bhadarva Sud 3 [September 2, 1924][1]

CHI. KANTI[2],

I have not asked you to write to me. You have become very wise. I had therefore nothing to say to you. But you should certainly write to me in a clear and good hand and let me know your ideas. Take care of Rasik[3] and ask him to write to me. We have had good rains here. Nothing has been decided yet about Delhi.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. KANTI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 10149

47. SPEECH AT NATIONAL MEDICAL COLLEGE, BOMBAY[4]

September 2, 1924

Mahatmaji in his short address expressed his great joy at seeing the National Medical College progressing so satisfactorily. He said that when Dr. Sathaye first asked his advice about starting the institution he was rather diffident, as the task was so huge and beset with many difficulties. But now he was pleased to see for himself that his fears were unfounded and that the institution had achieved such a marvellous success. He expected that the lead-

[1] From the postmark
[2] & [3] Sons of Harilal Gandhi, Gandhiji's eldest son
[4] On the occasion of the third foundation day of the College

ing men in the medical profession would continue to give their support, and he also hoped that the rich men of Bombay would remove the housing difficulty of the College and also give money to support it. In the end, he exhorted the students to wear khaddar and spin for half an hour as a national duty.

The Bombay Chronicle, 3-9-1924

48. SPEECH AT CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEETING, BOMBAY

[*September 2, 1924*][1]

Speaking at the Congress Committee at Mandvi, Mr. Gandhi urged that the two parties in the Congress should not fight amongst themselves, but must unite. He himself did not want to fight and admitted his defeat. It was India's misfortune that they had differences which were retarding progress. He had written to Pandit Motilal Nehru that he (Gandhi) was not going to fight, but had laid down his arms. The speaker appealed to all for spinning, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability on which their independence rested. Swaraj without khaddar would be for educated men of Bombay, but for agriculturists there could be no swaraj without khaddar. Export of cotton meant their ruin. Fight between Hindus and Mohammedans over mosques and temples was cowardice, not bravery. He exhorted them in the name of God to spin and serve the country.

The Hindu, 4-9-1924

49. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU[2]

[On or after *September 2, 1924*]

THANKS YOUR WIRE GREAT RELIEF.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10147

[1] From the Bombay Secret Abstracts

[2] In reply to his telegram received on September 2; it read: "Your letter. Story about Jawahar is a tissue of lies from beginning to end. Did not insist on undue going to school but merely expressed wish which Jawahar dutifully obeyed. School wholly unconnected with Government. Jawahar's objection being based on unsuitability of instruction imparted. I was solely prompted by desire give Indu companionship of children of her age regardless of instruction and Jawahar eventually agreed. . . ."

50. *LETTER TO SANTOK GANDHI*

Wednesday, Bhadarva Sud 4 [September 3, 1924][1]

CHI. SANTOK[2],

What a sad occasion on which to write to you! You must have received my telegram sent to your Rajkot address and you must all have returned to the Ashram. Remember what you have learnt at the Ashram. I hope you have not let a single tear flow from your eyes. The world feels the grief of bereavement, but you should curb it, and realize the meaning of death. He who has understood the second chapter of the *Gita* will not grieve over what is inevitable. It is on such occasions that we should be guided by the teachings of the scriptures.

My relations with Shivlalbhai were intimate. I respected him as my elder and on many matters I consulted him alone. Our relations subsisted till the end. They did not always find outward expression as the occasions for consultation were rare, but whenever we met we could read each other's feelings in our eyes. I have always known him as an honest banker. Let us remember his good qualities and try to emulate them.

What news has Jamnadas brought in regard to Rukhi[3]? I am always thinking about her. But I do not think of anything else so long as I do not hear from Jamnadas. Rukhi has sent word that she cannot write letters. This is not true. She ought to write to me and tell me freely whatever she has on her mind.

I have not written a separate letter to anyone in Rajkot, as I know nobody there. If anyone is still there you may send a copy of this letter to him.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 6199. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

[1] The letter refers to the death of the addressee's father which occurred in 1924.

[2] Wife of Maganlal Gandhi

[3] Addressee's daughter

51. *NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN*

Whilst I was listening to praises of me at the Excelsior Theatre in Bombay on Sunday last,[1] I felt that Mr. Bharucha had staged a play for the benefit of the distressed people in the South. But an incident changed it into a serious business for me. Mr. Bharucha had endeavoured to bring on the platform people belonging to different political parties. He had therefore put up Mr. Jamnadas Dwarakadas as one of the speakers. Mr. Jamnadas spoke of me as Gandhiji instead of 'Mahatma'. Two or three in the audience who could not brook the insult of my being called 'Gandhiji' required the speaker to call me 'Mahatma'. Mr. Jamnadas bravely but courteously persisted in calling me Gandhiji though, he said, he loved me no less than any in the audience. He protested that his manner of addressing me was more pleasing to me. The interruptions however continued almost to the end. It was nevertheless most creditable to the meeting that the cry against Mr. Jamnadas was not taken up by the audience. Mr. Jamnadas was able to finish his speech without difficulty. All the same the interruption jarred on me. I saw that those admirers of me dishonoured and misinterpreted their idol whereas Mr. Jamnadas honoured and interpreted me properly by courteously but firmly reiterating his dissent from some of my political views and by refusing to call me 'Mahatma' at the dictation of any person. I therefore asked the friends who had been so discourteous to publicly apologize. I drew their attention to the fact that the rules of public meetings demanded a respectful behaviour even towards opponents. The code of courtesy was still more exacting for non-violent non-co-operators. The non-violence of non-co-operators obliged them to respect their opponents even as they respected their friends. Moreover the audience must respect the sentiments of those in whose honour they might meet. The interrupters should have known that I had often said that the name 'Mahatma' stank in my nostrils. It did for instance at the time of the Bombay riots of 1921. The use of the adjective was prohibited at the Ashram. Mr. Jamnadas had therefore done what was after my heart. After saying this I paused for the apology. The audience helped me by murmuring approval and advice to the interrupters to apologize. And the

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Excelsior Theatre, Bombay", 31-8-1924.

latter bravely stood up and apologized with folded hands. It was a sight that I cannot easily forget. In resuming my speech and in thanking the interrupters for their apology, I could not help remarking that the seed of swaraj lay more in such true and gentlemanly conduct than in any number of eloquent speeches or debates and votes in the Councils. The penitent members of the audience had brought swaraj nearer by their frank and fearless repentance.

This prelude which was both unhappy and happy at the same time emphasized the note underlying my speech and gave it an unexpectedly dignified turn.

It enabled me in dealing with Malabar to pay a tardy tribute to the inexhaustible capacity for social service of Mr. Devdhar and to show that though in politics we seemed to differ as poles asunder my regard for his personal character, devotion to duty and self-sacrifice remained undiminished. I then presented the spinning-wheel as a symbol of our identification with the poorest of the soil. Mere lip profession was not enough. Even a genuine sensation of pity was not enough. We wanted the poor to feel that, if they toiled for us, we spin for their sakes. The half-fed millions were in a state of blank despair. They had lost faith in themselves and in us. They had resigned themselves to death by slow and painful starvation. They had become so accustomed to living on charity doles that they almost refused to work. They had become less than animals, they were living sepulchres. If we wanted these millions to earn a few pice by doing honest and honourable toil, the only possible instrument to present them with was the gentle and graceful spinning-wheel which could be turned even by the most delicate. The only effective way of inducing the millions to exchange a listless, inane life of beggary for that of dignified and easy labour was for us to invite them to take up the spinning-wheel by turning it ourselves. In the words of the *Gita* what the great ones did the simple folk copied.

From the spinning-wheel I came to the hope that was expressed by so many friends that I would show a way out of the present awful impasse in national life. I told the audience that I was aware of my responsibility and was trying to devise a way out. I was in correspondence with Pandit Motilalji. But I had nothing else to suggest but satyagraha. The people had hitherto known it in its terrible aspect of civil disobedience and non-co-operation. But it had a benign aspect which was its permanent part. Whatever shape it took, it must now be the benign

[1] The source has "their".

aspect of satyagraha which must be presented to the public. We had quarrelled too long and often on trivials. We were heedlessly divided. There was no reason why we could not find a common denominator of action. There must be some things on which we could all unite and for the prosecution of which we could all meet under the same roof. The spinning-wheel, unity between the different communities and removal by Hindus of untouchability were the items on which perhaps all could unite. I had already seen Mrs. Besant and ventured in a humble spirit to place my view before her. I would likewise canvass the other leaders. I would on no account divide the Congress and if I found a desire to quarrel, I would certainly not only take no part in any division but would take a back seat and retire from any such unseemly contest. Any programme must therefore be a programme arrived at not by the majority of votes but by mutual informal discussion and agreement. The vote may come in, if necessary, after agreement on all sides. If I found that there was no programme that I could work, I should gladly retire altogether but not lead obstruction. The most benign spirit of satyagraha was a spirit of perfect self-surrender in which resistance if any was on matters of obvious principle which one might have practised and woven into one's life. I told the audience that the whole science of satyagraha if it might be so called was evolved out of prolonged experience in the domestic field. In its terrible aspect I had to practise it in connection with my own wife, son and brother long deceased. It had cost me their estrangement. But it was all out of deepest love. I believe myself to be capable of boundless love as well towards other creatures of God as towards my own dearest relatives. Sometimes love's anguish left deep scars on the loved ones but it left much deeper ones on the lover's bosom. I owed no ill will to Englishmen. I had in them some of my best friends but there came a time when I had to say, "You shall not exploit my country. The exploitation has done incalculable harm. Some of you are indifferent to its welfare and would squeeze it as much as you can. Some others among you believe in your ignorance that the English rule in India is for her own good and that you are her trustees. This thing must end and that soon." For me to say this was to put my whole soul into doing it. The attempt had resulted in bringing into prominence the terrible aspect of satyagraha. It had not ended the system of exploitation but it had resulted in dividing us. I must therefore put forth my whole energy in exposing to view the benignant aspect of satyagraha. That could only

be exhibited not by insistence but surrender. If I did not succeed I knew that it would not be due to the weakness in the science but the weakness of the scientist who did not enforce in his own person the doctrines he knew to be true. I knew that I was not a 'Mahatma', I did know that I was an *alpatma*[1]. Love knew no bounds and conquered all without exception. It melted the stoniest heart. It knew no self. Who knows that unconsciously even to myself, there was no anger or ill will lurking in me. But I must not flinch. I must try to conquer self and in the process heal the breaches I saw in our midst. "Pray", I concluded, "that I may have the strength to do so."

Young India, 4-9-1924

52. *KHADI BHANDAR IN BOMBAY*

The All-India Khadi Board has practically taken over under proper securities the Khadi Bhandar hitherto managed by Mr. Vithaldas Jerajani. The idea is to regulate the distribution of surplus khadi from the different provinces and to supply the needs of cities like Bombay. This could not as yet be done through private agency. It must necessarily be an All-India concern. The prices are to be controlled and regulated by the A.I.K.B., so that khadi may be supplied to the buyers at as cheap a rate as possible. All the accounts of the store are necessarily subject to audit and inspection by the A.I.K.B.

Young India, 4-9-1924

53. *SPINNING IN BANARAS*

Professor Ramdas Gour has sent an interesting report of how he introduced spinning among the children of the municipal schools of Banaras. He bought 40 second-hand wheels, carding-bows, etc. He next taught thirteen teachers the art of spinning. The latter in their turn taught their fellow-teachers. Thus in a little over a month 175 teachers became competent spinning masters. The professor was helped by his wife and daughter. Thus the professor proudly says:

> If each school had been supplied with an extra spinning expert it would have cost at least Rs. 10,000 a year. . . . This problem was solved by my

[1] Small soul

giving only four hours daily for five or six weeks in training the existing staff.

He adds:

> Now there is no teacher who cannot spin or card and henceforward no man or woman is to be employed as a teacher who does not know carding and spinning.

His future plans the professor describes as follows:

> As this difficulty was obviated, I approached the Board with a detailed scheme for introducing 350 spinning-wheels in 26 upper primary schools to teach carding and spinning to about 700 boys at least, with provision for half a dozen pit-looms for a weaving section for khadi, a weaving teacher, a supervisor, a carpenter, and sufficient cotton to give work to each student for half an hour daily. The scheme demanded Rs. 6,000/- per annum. The Board, however, felt very diffident and postponed the question from meeting to meeting for 2 months. On the 26th of July last, they saw their way to grant Rs. 3,000/- only, for the year. I have, therefore, resolved to cut off the item of cotton almost entirely and to reduce several other items to a workable minimum, so that the work may be carried on [on] a smaller scale. I am now getting only 300 spinning-wheels made with 600 removable spindle-holders, of the pattern I purchased at the Sabarmati Ashram. With the little improvements I have in view (the result of a study at the Ashram), I hope to make it possible for more than a thousand boys and girls to learn and practise spinning every day and produce yarn of tolerably good quality. I am now waiting only for the wheels to be made, and this must take its time. In the meantime, I am appealing to the parents and guardians to allow a daily supply of cotton from their pockets. I am to give the children the instruments and the necessary instruction and the parents to give them cotton. The yarn will be theirs and if they so choose they will collect their yarn and give it over to us to be woven into khadi and we will supply them khadi on reasonable weaving charges. I am going to open also a tailoring class and will make tailoring cheaper for khadi.

The public will watch this experiment with sympathetic interest. Let me hope that the other teachers will follow the example set by Professor Ramdas Gour.

Young India, 4-9-1924

54. *FOR FALLEN HUMANITY*

It was at Barisal that I had the privilege of meeting our fallen sisters, victims of our lust, now nearly three years ago.[1] Some of them said, "We earn from two to three rupees per day. You must give us some occupation that would give us as much." For a moment I sank within me but immediately came to myself and said, "No, my dear sisters, I cannot suggest anything that would give you two or three rupees per day but I must ask you to give up your calling even though you have to starve. There is the spinning-wheel however. If you take it, it will be your salvation."

The fallen sisters are only a small part of the fallen humanity of India. The skin and bone of Orissa are also in a sense part of that humanity. They are the victims of our ignorance as the first are of our lust. In their case it is not our animal lust but the lust for wealth that reduces them to skin and bone. They bleed so that we may become rich.

But now, thank God, we the educated middle class are hungering to identify ourselves with our fallen sisters and our starving brothers. We desire swaraj so that they may live. We cannot all go to the villages and help the villagers. The fallen sister is a perpetual reminder to us to become pure. How then can we think of and feel for them from day to day? What may we all do for them every day? We are so weak that we want to do as little as possible. What is that little? I can think of nothing else but the spinning-wheel. The work must be easy, capable of being done by all, the learned and the ignorant, the good and the bad, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, the strong and the weak, no matter to what religion they belong. The work to be effective must be the same for all. The spinning-wheel satisfies all these conditions. Therefore he or she who spins for half an hour every day serves the masses in the most efficient manner possible. And he renders whole-hearted conscious service to the fallen humanity of India and thus brings swaraj nearer for that service.

The spinning-wheel for us is the foundation for all public corporate life. It is impossible to build any permanent public life without it. It is the one visible link that indissolubly binds

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 92-5.

us to the lowest in the land and thus gives them a hope. We may or must add many things to it, but let us first make sure of it, even as a wise mason makes sure of his foundation before he begins to build the super-structure, and the bigger the structure the deeper and stronger the foundation. For the result to be obtained therefore spinning should become universal in India.

But spinning will be not only the connecting link between the masses and the classes, it will be the link between the different political parties. It will become common to all the parties. They may disagree on all other things if they like, but they can agree on this at the least.

I ask therefore every one who loves the country, loves the poorest and the fallen, to give half an hour's labour daily to spinning even and well-twisted yarn for their sake and in the name of God. As this must be a gift to the nation, it must be delivered to the All-India Khadi Board with religious regularity.

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55. *NOTES*

Lowest Common Measure

The readers of *Young India* will find in the summary of my speech at the Excelsior Theatre, Bombay, an idea developed for the purpose of bringing together all the various elements in the country that are at present working against one another often without knowing that they are doing so. Everybody is asking me to bring these together. I am therefore trying to see what can bring these elements together. In other words what are the things in which the majority of those who have at all taken part in moulding public life can or do agree or which are indispensable for our internal growth. Though the external may have its use constituted as I am, I have all my life thought of growth from within. External appliances are perfectly useless if there is no internal reaction. When a body is perfect within, it becomes impervious to external adverse influences and is independent of external help. Moreover when the internal organs are sound they automatically attract external help. Hence the proverb, God helps those who help themselves. If therefore we would all work to bring about internal perfection we need not take up any other activity at all. But whether we do so or not at least the Congress may restrict itself to internal development alone.

What then is this lowest common measure necessary for such growth? I have always suggested the spinning-wheel and khaddar, unity among all the religions, and removal by Hindus of untouchability. I hardly think that there is any difference of opinion about the last two items. I know there is still a difference of opinion as to the national necessity of the spinning-wheel and khaddar and the method of working it. I have endeavoured to show elsewhere why khaddar is a necessity of national existence and universal spinning is the only method.

When Will It End?

People are however asking, "When will this suspense all end?" So far as I am concerned it is all ended. I have no fight left in me. I do not propose to fight the Swarajists at the forthcoming Congress. Nor do I wish to fight the Moderates. I have no terms or my only terms are the beggar's bowl. I ask the Swarajist, the Moderate, the Liberal, the Conventionist to throw into it yarn of their own spinning. Such being my mental condition I can but advise all the national workers simply to concentrate their effort on spinning, on promoting unity and, if Hindus, on removing untouchability.

But the No-changers further ask, "How about Congress Committees?" My own opinion is that the constitution has broken down. We have no electorate worth the name. Where there is a respectable number on the roll, it is not of those who take a lively interest in the Congress proceedings. We are therefore almost a self-appointed electorate and self-appointed representatives. With such an electorate bitterness is inevitable when there are rival candidates. Impartiality is possible only when the electorate is large, intelligent and independent. My advice therefore is that where there is the slightest possibility of friction and opinion is known to be evenly balanced the No-changers should withdraw from the contest. They may keep office or keep their majority where there is no possibility of friction and where opinion is overwhelmingly in their favour. There should be no manipulation, no manœuvring. It is a terrible responsibility workers take upon their shoulders when they exploit electorates. Corruption is the bane of governments by majority. Let those at least who know better be no party to it.

What about the President?

The uncertainty as to the Presidentship too is a cause of suspense to many. I am sorry that I should have become the cause

of uncertainty and suspense ever since my return to public life. I am sorry for it. But what cannot be cured must be endured. I still do not know where I stand. I am not going to preside for the purpose of division. I will accept the honour if my acceptance serves the nation in any way. The fact is I am tired of these divisions. I read *Faust* in the Yeravda Jail for the second time. My first reading of it years ago left no impression on me. I could not catch Goethe's message. I do not know that I have even now. But I may claim to have understood it somewhat. Margaret is sore at heart and troubled. She finds no relief from her misery save by going to the spinning-wheel and to the music of the wheel giving vent to her grief. I was much struck by the whole conception. Margaret is alone in her room torn within with doubt and despair. The poet sends her to her wheel lying in a corner in the room. The reader may be sure she had a well-chosen library of books, a few paintings and a copy of handwritten and illustrated Bible. She finds no solace either in the paintings or the books or, for Margaret, the Book of books. She involuntarily goes to the wheel and finds peace in refusing to find it. Here are the noble lines:

> My peace is gone, and my heart is sore:
> I have lost him, and lost him, for evermore!
> The place, where he is not, to me is the tomb.
> The world is sadness and sorrow and gloom!
> My poor sick brain is crazed with pain;
> And my poor sick heart is torn in twain!
> My peace is gone and my heart is sore,
> For lost is my love for evermore!

You may paraphrase them a little and the verses almost represent my condition. I seem to have lost my Love too and feel distracted. I feel the abiding presence of my Lover and yet he seems to be away from me. For he refuses to guide me and give clear-cut injunctions. On the contrary, like Krishna, the arch mischief-maker to the Gopis, he exasperates me by appearing, disappearing and reappearing. When I see the light steadily before my eyes, I shall see my way clear and ask the reader to follow me.

Meanwhile I can only take up the wheel or speak or write about it and commend it to the reader. In my loneliness, it is my only infallible friend and comforter. May it be so to the reader. One friend at least equally tossed like Margaret and me says: "Fortunately you have left the spinning-wheel for us. I am therefore consoling myself as much as I can by spinning."

Nagpur Again

Dr. Moonje[1] has warned me against saying anything about the Hindu-Muslim tension in Nagpur. This is however for the third time that they have quarrelled and come to blows. Have they decided to try their brute strength before settling down to peaceful life? Can nothing be done to heal the breach? The parties appear in Nagpur to be equally matched. Even so, they will soon find that perpetual boxing is not a profitable performance. Surely there are sane Hindus and sane Mussalmans enough in Nagpur to adjust their differences and forget past wrongs. Attacks on isolated individuals is a new development like the desecration of temples. Most quarrels are of a momentary nature and are due to excitement over some trifles. But attacks on individuals who have done no wrong are evidence of calculation and pre-arranged plans on either side. But I must forbear till we have an authorized version from both parties. I can only hope that the saner members will leave no stone unturned to come to amicable and lasting terms.

Progress in Andhra

I have read the report of khaddar work done in the East Krishna District which includes four taluks. The local Khadi Board began operations, as was quite proper, with storing cotton. It undertook the work of carding and slivers-making and distributing the latter among spinners and then collecting yarn. It organized also the sale of khadi in the district[2] itself. It has opened several khadi depots for the purpose. The spinners include Brahmins, Mussalmans, Kapus and toddy-drawers. They spin about 180 lb. per month. The price of their yarn is on an average over Rs. 2 per lb. of counts varying from 15 to 30. They had a capital of Rs. 7,250. The total sales including cotton and slivers came to about Rs. 30,400. This is good so far as it goes, but not enough for the period covered by the report. The movement of voluntary spinning revolutionizes the method of working. Production through paid spinners must of course continue. But now we may not be satisfied with a few hundred wheels going. It must however take a little time before the movement percolates down to the masses. When Congressmen have become seasoned spinners, they will not be satisfied with merely giving

[1] Leader of the Hindu Mahasabha; attended the Round Table Conference in 1930

[2] The source has: "khadi depots in the district".

half an hour to the nation, but some of them will go down to the villages as experts to organize them to become self-supporting units.

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56. UNDER THE TEST

The following results of the examination, by the A.I.K.B., of the yarn received from various provinces, last month, will be of much interest and instruction.

ANDHRA

The province has not come up to the expectations raised of it as the home of the finest spinning in India.

There were 429 packets received. 50 contain overtwisted and indifferently spun yarn. The hanks are very various in length, one being no less than 6 feet, and some being as short as 9 to 10 inches. These last, especially because they are not leased, will entail a lot of waste of time and yarn in the unwinding. Attempt seems to have been made in many cases, of obtaining higher count of yarn from cotton of less calibre, and in no case does the yarn seem to have been sprayed. Here is a list of those who may be said to have passed "with honours".

	Yds.	Count	Quality
1. Sj. M. Paparao	666	55	Very good
2. ,, K. Suryanarayana	2660	49	,, ,,
3. ,, M. Laxmi Narasimha	5700	47	Fair
4. ,, P. Kanakamma	2000	48	Good
5. ,, K. Ashwanathacharyulu	2000	41	Fair

The registers and labels are all right.

ASSAM

The quality would almost make up for the quantity, if it was not very little. Spraying would have added to the excellence. Honours:

1. Sj. Shivprasad Barna	2940	40	Good

AJMER

Better than the yarn received from other parts of Rajputana.

BOMBAY

The redeeming feature is that there are more women spinners than men, no less than four being Parsis. Some of the yarn

is indifferent, whilst there are some specimen of properly spun, properly hanked and sprayed yarn too.

Bihar

Bihar has failed to reach even tolerably near the mark, both in point of quantity and quality, Babu Rajendra Prasad[1] tops the list, having sent 10,148 yards of 8 counts well spun and well hanked. But there is hardly a single good second to him.

Bengal

Bengal has come out most creditably. 107 members of Khadi Pratishthan have sent yarn which uniformly shows the hand of the practised spinner. The hanks should be more uniform, leased, and the yarn sprayed.

A little lady of eighteen has won an easy first class first in all India. Her name is Shrimati Aparnadevi. She has sent 7,000 yards of beautifully twisted and even yarn of 76 counts.

The labels are perfect.

Central Provinces—Hindi

Not creditable on the whole. There are a few good specimens though:

1.	Devi Subhadra Kumari	2000	30	Good
2.	Umrao Singh Chauhan	2048	22	Fair

Central Provinces—Marathi

Most of the yarn does not show a higher count than 20 but bears the mark of practised spinning. There is some yarn of lower count, but very well and evenly spun. The labels are indifferently done, so much so that it was impossible in case of some very good yarn, to find out the name of the spinner.

Gujarat

First in point of quantity and shows uniformly practised spinning. Even Cutch and Kathiawar, proverbial for coarse spinning, have sent fine yarn. The palm has been carried away by Darbar Sahib Gopaldas Desai, Dhasa, who has sent 5,074 yards of good yarn of 45 counts (on an average). One of his hanks has yarn of 72 counts, another of 55 and the rest 40 and thereabouts. Some members of the Khadi Mandal have sent very good yarn ranging to 30 counts.

The registers and labels are perfect.

[1] 1884-1963; statesman and scholar; chairman, Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-49; first President of India, 1950-62

Delhi

Only 12 packets were received, only one of which contains well-spun yarn, but bears a label with illegible superscription.

Karnatak

Quantity small, quality good. All yarn unsprayed. The best spinners:

1.	Sj. Shanker G. Golatgi	2040	38	Very good
2.	,, Dr. D. R. Hulialkar	2000	40	Fair
3.	,, Bhimrao Nagavi	2040	38	Good

Maharashtra

Very indifferent on the whole. One or two places like Ratnagiri and Bhusawal show practised spinning. Mr. Dastane's yarn of 14 counts is good. The registers do not tally with the labels.

Punjab

Very little quantity, quality too except in three or four instances does no credit to the Punjab.

Sind

A sorry affair.

Little trace of practised spinning.

Tamilnad

Yarn is of uniformly good quality. But for the quantity it easily competes with Bengal. Especially noteworthy is the yarn in fairly large quantity sent by the Vykom volunteers. It is all uniformly good. Honours winners:

1.	Sj. Minakshi Sundaram	2040	97	Good
2.	,, Shanmuga Sundaram Pillay	2520	80	,,

The register is the best prepared in all India.

United Provinces

Very little spun yarn, but there are some very good exceptions:

1.	Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	4051	23to40	Very good
2.	Srimati Kamala Nehru	2548	17to22	Good
3.	Sj. Shambhunath	2265	15	,,
4.	,, Purushottamdas Tandon	2800	14	Fair

UTKAL

Indifferent on the whole, but as in U.P. there are some very good exceptions.

1.	Sj. Vishwanath Parida	2000	30	Good
2.	,, Bikancharan Hota	2000	28	,,
3.	,, Gopabandhu Chaudhri	2000	21	,,
4.	,, Niranjan Patnayak	2223	19	,,
5.	,, Mahomed Hanif	2000	16	,,

BURMA, BERAR, KERALA

There was hardly any yarn to speak of.

Thus there is room for improvement everywhere. Uniformity of length of hanks should be secured at least for each province. It saves considerable after-expense. Under the sacrificial voluntary system in which everyone spins for love, we should be able to reach perfection, if the spinners bear in mind the detailed instructions issued by the A.I.K.B. from time to time. I tender my congratulations to the young lady (Aparna Devi) who stands first in the all-India list.

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57. *MY JAIL EXPERIENCES–XI*[1]

WHAT I READ [–I]

As a boy I had not much taste for reading anything outside my school books. They alone gave me enough food for thought; for it was natural for me to reduce to practice what I learnt at school. For home reading I had an intense dislike. I used to labour through home lessons because I had to. During my student days in England too the same habit persisted of not reading outside the books for examinations. When however I began life, I felt I ought to read for the sake of gaining general knowledge. But at the earliest period of my life it became one of storm and stress. It commenced with a fight with the then political agent of Kathiawar. I had therefore not much time for literary pursuits. In South Africa for one year I had fair leisure in spite of the battle for freedom that faced me. The year 1893 I devoted to religious striving. The reading was therefore wholly religious. After 1894 all the time for sustained reading I got was in the

[1] The first instalment of this series appeared in *Young India*, 17-4-1924; *vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 446-9.

jails of South Africa. I had developed not only a taste for reading but for completing my knowledge of Sanskrit and studying Tamil, Hindi and Urdu. Tamil because I was in touch with so many Tamilians in South Africa and Urdu because I had dealings with so many Mussalmans. The South African jails had whetted my appetite and I was grieved when during my last incarceration in South Africa I was prematurely discharged.

When therefore the opportunity came to me in India, I hailed it with joy. I mapped out a rigid programme of studies at Yeravda to finish which six years were not enough. During the first three months I had a vague hope that India would rise to the occasion, complete the boycott of foreign cloth and unlock the prison gates. But I soon learnt that such was not to be the case. I saw at once that it meant laborious quiet organizing which could not take the nation anything less than five years. I had no desire whatsoever for being discharged before my time except by the peaceful constructive act of the nation even if it was not actually swaraj. I therefore settled down to studies with the zest of a youth of twenty-four instead of an old man of fifty-four with a broken constitution. I accounted for every minute of my time and would have been discharged a fair Urdu and Tamil scholar and well versed in Sanskrit. I would have satisfied my desire for reading original Sanskrit texts. But such was not to be the case. My studies were rudely interrupted by my unfortunate illness and consequent discharge. However the following list[1] gives the reader an idea of my studies:

The Cambridge History of Scotland; *The Master and His Teaching*; *Arm of God*; *Christianity in Practice*; Tulsidas' *Ramayana* (Hindi); *Satyagraha and Asahayoga* (Hindi); the Koran; *The Way to Begin Life*; *Trips to the Moon* (Lucian); *Indian Administration* (Thakore); *Natural History of Birds*; *The Young Crusader*; *Bible View of the World Martyrs*; Farrar's *Seekers after God*; *Misra Kumari* (Gujarati); *Stories from the History of Rome*; *Tom Brown's School Days*; *Wisdom of the Ancients* (Bacon); *History of India* (Gujarati)—Chandrakant; Patanjali's *Yogadarshana* (Kania's translation); Valmiki's *Ramayana* (Gujarati translation); *Five Nations* (Kipling); *Equality* (Edward Bellamy); *St. Paul in Greece*; *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Rosebery's *Pitt*; *Jungle Book* (Kipling); *Faust*; *Life of John Howard*; *Mahabharata*—all the books (Gujarati translation); *Dropped from the Clouds* (Jules Verne); Irving's *Life of Columbus*; *Ramayana* by Girdhar (Gujarati); *Five Empires* (Wilberforce); *Lays of*

[1] *Vide* also Vol. XXIII, pp. 144-53 and 178-88.

Ancient Rome; *The Crusades*; Gibbon's *Rome*; *Urdu Readers*; *Bhagavata* (Gujarati translation); Bankim's *Krishnacharitra* (Jhaveri's translation); Vaidya's *Krishna* (Gujarati translation); Tilak's *Gita* (Gujarati translation); *Saraswatichandra* (Gujarati); *Manusmriti* (Gujarati translation); *Ishopanishad* (Aurobindo's commentary); Kabir's Songs; Jacob Boehmen's *Supersensual Life*; *Pro Christo et Ecclesia*; *Kathavali Upanishad* (Hindi commentary); *Galilean*; *Jnaneshwari* (Gujarati translation); *Philo Christus*; *Satyartha Prakasha* (Hindi); *Prem Mitra* (English); *The Six Systems* (Gujarati translations); *The Gospel and the Plough*; Nathuram's *Commentary on the Gita*; Shankara's *Commentary on the Gita*; Rajchandra's Letters and Writings; *Ourselves and the Universe* (J. Brierly); *What Christianity Means to Me* (Abbott); *Steps to Christianity*; *My Philosophy and Religion* (Trine); *Sadhana* (Rabindranath); Bhanu's *Commentaries on Upanishads*; Max Muller's *Upanishads*; Wells' *History*; The Bible; *Science of Peace* (Bhagwandas); *Barrack-room Ballads* (Kipling); *Evolution of Cities* (Geddes); *Life of Ramanuja;* Cunningham's *Sikhs*; Gokulchand's *Sikhs*; Macauliff's *Sikhs*; *Ethics of Islam*; *Social Evolution* (Kidd); *Manusmriti* (Buhler); *Our Hellenic Heritage* (James); *Avesta* (Dadachandji); *Gita* (Aurobindo); *Elements of Sociology* (Spencer); *Social Efficiency* (Pherwani); *Message of Mahomed* (Wadia); *Message of Christ* (Wadia); *Saints of Islam* (Hassan); *Early Zoroastrianism* (Moulton); *Travels in the Himalayas* (Gujarati); *Sita-haran* (Gujarati); *Buddha and Mahavira* (Gujarati); *Rama and Krishna* (Gujarati); *Man and Superman*; *Markandeya Purana* (Gujarati); *Poorva Rang* (Gujarati); *Life of Hasrat Umar*[1] (Urdu); *Confessions of the Prophet* (Urdu); *History of Civilization* (Buckle); *Jaya and Jayant* (Gujarati); Rabindranath's Essays (Gujarati); Countess Tolstoy's *Defence*; *Kalapani-nikatha* (Gujarati); Economics (Gujarati); *Gita Govinda*; *Varieties of Religious Experience* (James); *Origin and Evolution of Religion* (Hopkins); Lecky's *European Morals*; *Maharashtra-dharma* (Marathi); *Freedom and Growth* (Holmes); *Evolution of Man* (Haeckel); *Muktadhara* (Gujarati)—Rabindranath; *Sinking Ship* (Gujarati)—Rabindranath; *Life of the Prophet* (Urdu)—Maulana Shibli; Dr. Mahomed Ali's Koran; *Rajayoga* (Vivekananda); *Confluence* of *Religions* (Champakrai Jain); *Mystics of Islam* (Nicholson); *Gospel of Buddha* (Paul Carus); Rhys Davids' *Lectures on Buddhism*; *Spirit of Islam* (Ameer Ali); *Modern Problems* (Lodge); *Mahomed* (Washington Irving); *Syadvada Manjari*; *History of the Saracens* (Ameer Ali); *European Civilization* (Guizot); *Al Faruq* (Shibli); *Rise*

[1] The source has *Hasrat Mohani.*

of the Dutch Republic (Motley); *Musings of Saint Theresa*; *Vedanta* (Rajam Iyer); *Uttaradhyayan Sutra*; *Rosicrucian Mysteries*; *Dialogues of Plato*; *Al Kalam* (Urdu) Shibli; Woodroffe's *Shakta and Shakti*; *Bhagavati Sutra* (incomplete).

Let the reader however not imagine that I read all these books by choice. Some of them were useless and outside the jail would not have read them. Some of them were sent by friends known and unknown and I felt I was bound for their sakes at least to go through them. The Yeravda Jail has what may be called not a bad collection of English books. Some of them were really good books, such for instance as Farrar's *Seekers after God*, Lucian's *Trips to the Moon* or Jules Verne's *Dropped from the Clouds*, all of them excellent in their own way. Farrar's is an inspiring book giving the best side of the lives of Marcus Aurelius, Seneca and Epictetus. Lucian's book is a fine and instructive satire. Jules Verne teaches science in the guise of a story. His method is inimitable.

Many Christian friends were most attentive to me. I received books from them from America, England and India. I must confess that whilst I recognized their kind motive, I could not appreciate the majority of the books they sent. I wish I could say something of their gifts that would please them. But that would not be fair or truthful if I could not mean it. The orthodox books on Christianity do not give me any satisfaction. My regard for the life of Jesus is indeed very great. His ethical teaching, his common sense, his sacrifice command my reverence. But I do not accept the orthodox teaching that Jesus was or is God incarnate in the accepted sense or that he was or is the only son of God. I do not believe in the doctrine of appropriation of another's merit. His sacrifice is a type and an example for us. Every one of us has to be "crucified" for salvation. I do not take the words "Son" "Father" and "the Holy Ghost" literally. They are all figurative expressions. Nor do I accept the limitations that are sought to be put upon the teaching of *The Sermon on the Mount.* I can discover no justification in the New Testament for wars. I regard Jesus as one among the most illustrious teachers and prophets the world has seen. Needless to say I do not regard the Bible as an infallible record of the life and teachings of Jesus. Nor do I consider every word in the New Testament as God's own word. Between the Old and the New there is a fundamental difference. Whilst the Old contains some very deep truths, I am unable to pay it the same honours I pay the New Testament. I regard the latter as an extension of the teaching of the Old and in some matters rejection of the Old. Nor do I regard the New as the last word of

God. Religious ideas like everything else are subject to the same law of evolution that governs everything else in this universe. Only God is changeless and as His message is received through the imperfect human medium, it is always liable to suffer distortion in proportion as the medium is pure or otherwise. I would therefore respectfully urge my Christian friends and well-wishers to take me as I am. I respect and appreciate their wish that I should think and be as they are even as I respect and appreciate a similar wish on the part of my Mussalman friends. I regard both the religions as equally true with my own. But my own gives me full satisfaction. It contains all that I need for my growth. It teaches me to pray not that others may believe as I believe but that they may grow to their full height in their own religion. My constant prayer therefore is for a Christian or a Mussalman to be a better Christian and a better Mahomedan. I am convinced, I know, that God will ask, asks us now, not what we label ourselves but what we are, i.e., what we do. With Him *deed* is everything, *belief* without deed is nothing. With Him doing is believing. The reader will pardon me for this digression. But it was necessary for me to deliver my soul over the Christian literature with which the Christian friends flooded me in the jail, if only to show my appreciation of their interest in my spiritual welfare.

That which I would not have missed was the *Mahabharata* and the Upanishads, the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata*. The Upanishads whetted my appetite for exploring the Vedic religion at its source. Its bold speculations afforded the keenest delight. And their spirituality satisfied the soul. At the same time I must confess that there was much in some of them that I was unable to understand or appreciate in spite of the help of the copious notes of Professor Bhanu who has incorporated in them the whole of Shankara's commentaries and the substance of the others. The *Mahabharata* I had never read before except in scraps. I was even prejudiced against it, believing (falsely as it has now turned out) that it was nothing but a record of bloodshed and impossible long descriptions which would send me to sleep. I dreaded to approach the bulky volumes covering over closely printed six thousand pages. But having once commenced the reading, I was impatient to finish it, so entrancing it proved to be except in parts. I compared it, as I finished it in four months, not to a treasure chest in which you find nothing but polished gems limited as to quantity and quality but to an inexhaustible mine which the deeper one digs the more precious are the finds. The *Mahabharata* is not to me a historical record. It is hopeless as a history. But it deals with eternal

verities in an allegorical fashion. It takes up historical personages and events and transforms them into angels or devils as it suits the purpose of the poet whose theme is the eternal duel between good and evil, spirit and matter, God and Satan. It is like a mighty river which in its progress absorbs many streams, some even muddy. It is the conception of one brain. But it has undergone ravages and received accretions in process of time till it has become difficult always to say which is the original and which is apocryphal. The ending of it is magnificent. It demonstrates the utter nothingness of earthly power. The great sacrifice at the end is proved inefficacious in comparison with the sacrifice of the heart by a Brahmin who gave his little all, the last morsel, to a needy beggar. What is left to the virtuous Pandavas is poignant grief. The mighty Krishna dies helplessly. The numerous and powerful Yadavas because of their corruption die an inglorious death fighting amongst one another. Arjuna the unconquerable is conquered by a band of robbers, his Gandiv notwithstanding. The Pandavas retire leaving the throne to an infant. All but one die on the journey to heaven. And even Yudhishthira, the very embodiment of dharma, has to taste the foetid smell of hell for the lie he permitted himself to utter under stress. The inexorable law of cause and effect is allowed without exception to run its even course. The claim put forth in its behalf that it omits nothing that is useful or interesting and that is to be found in any other book is well sustained by this marvellous poem.

Young India, 4-9-1924

58. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, POONA*[1]

September 4, 1924

You have asked me why wearing of Indian mill cloth does not amount to boycott of foreign cloth. This is colossal ignorance. For fulfilling the boycott it is not enough if we wear mill cloth. The Bengalis even today complain of the exploitation of Bengal by the mill-owners at the time of the Partition. Their experience should teach us that boycott cannot be achieved with the help of only mill cloth. The propaganda should, therefore, be in favour of khadi only. It is obvious that mill cloth has no place in the house of the Congress.

[1] Held in the Reay Market under the presidentship of S. M. Paranjpe; nearly ten thousand people attended.

Shraddha[1] means self-confidence and self-confidence means faith in God. When dark clouds gather all around, when the shore is not in sight, and when one feels one is sinking, one who says even then that he will not drown is a man of faith. Draupadi was being stripped of her garments. Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, none of them was able to protect her from disgrace. Even then, she did not lose faith. She uttered the name of Krishna. She had the faith that as long as Shri Krishna was there, nobody could strip her naked.[2] Do you have this faith? If you have it, you can win swaraj with Poona's strength alone. A man of faith does not bargain or stipulate with God. Harischandra did not bargain with God. He was prepared to slay his wife.

Answering those who characterized khadi as madness, he said:

I asked Colonel Maddock[3] whether he would not allow his students to wear khadi. He did not call me a mad man. On the contrary, he said, if the students wished to wear khadi, why should he say no? And Mrs. Maddock took some khadi with her when she went to England. Those who do not want to work find many excuses. It is only our weak heart that stands in our way, no one else does. Let us assume that Gandhi is a mad man. Am I mad because I say that you should wear what our village folk wear? You may call me mad in respect of many other matters; but if you call me mad on account of khadi I shall retort that the accuser himself is off his head. I am speaking from experience. I repeat that you should take pity on the poor and wear khadi if you do not do anything else. In Champaran and Orissa, where it is difficult to earn even four annas a day, where one has to hold body and soul together by eating uncooked rice, where men have been reduced to mere skeletons, you should take pity on those people, recognize the God within them and contribute 2,000 yards of yarn—that is my request to you.

Tilak's message, "Swaraj is my birthright", was incomplete. Lokamanya had omitted to add, "the way to achieve it is through khaddar".[4]

[1] Here Gandhiji explains the meaning of his statement (made earlier while unveiling a statue of Chiplunkar) that "Maharashtra has *tyaga* (renunciation) but lacks *shraddha* (faith)."

[2] The story is narrated in the *Mahabharata*.

[3] Surgeon who operated on Gandhiji for acute appendicitis on January 12, 1924 at Sassoon Hospital, Poona

[4] This paragraph is from the Bombay Secret Abstracts.

I am beaten. If Motilalji and Shri Kelkar[1] ask me to leave the Congress, I have vowed that I would leave it. I am not going to seek a vote at Belgaum. Our "Pro-changers" and "No-changers" are misleading the common people by asking for their votes. I now feel that I committed a crime by seeking a vote at the [Ahmedabad] Congress. It was madness on my part to seek a vote. I am only a soldier. I should fight only as long as the fight did not give rise to bitterness or hatred. If the dispute with Motilalji or Shri Kelkar gives rise to bitterness, I would prefer to bow before them and touch their feet. I would rather drown myself in the waters of the Sabarmati than harbour hate or animosity in my heart. I am eager to fight on an issue of principles, but how can I fight at all when it is tinged with animosity? What is the use of a fight which strengthens the third party? Therefore I have vowed that I will stop fighting. I seek leave to say only one thing to the citizens of Poona. This mad Bania would say before going, "Citizens of Poona, hold fast to *shraddha* and win swaraj."

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-9-1924

59. SPEECH AT TILAK MAHAVIDYALAYA CONVOCATION, POONA

September 4, 1924

The education that you are receiving is intended for swaraj. I have taken up the responsibilities of a chancellor in Gujarat. That too I have done in my capacity as a fighter for freedom and with the intention of training students to be fighters for freedom. I landed in England on 4th[2] of August, 1914. What did I see there? As the War spread, the Inns of Courts went on closing. Many faculties in Oxford and Cambridge were also closed. During the War, they allotted a minor role to education. And why should they not? The outcome of education is that the student becomes an ideal citizen, an ideal patriot and an ornament to his family, his community and his nation.

I had witnessed the same scene twenty-four years earlier in South Africa. College students were enrolling themselves in the army and the Red Cross; girls and boys had all left their colleges

[1] N. C. Kelkar (1872-1947); political leader of Maharashtra, author and journalist

[2] The source has 6th, evidently a slip; *vide* Vol. XII, p. 523, footnote 1.

and taken up this work. I was a black man; but I saw white pleaders and barristers joining the War. I was ashamed, on entering the court, to find it deserted. I thought that I should also undertake this work. When the nation is in danger, only work to meet it needs to be done. If you recognize this point of view, then an unscholarly man like myself standing before you makes some sense; otherwise inviting me as a chief guest here would amount to pulling my leg.

What should an English visitor hope to find in your institution, if he came here after visiting Government institutions? Would he see your buildings or your scholars and expect to hear them speaking English? No, he will expect to discover a new spectacle here. In the other schools, he would not have seen spinning; here he would expect to see spinning and weaving. He would want to see cotton growing in your lawns. He would like to see your yarn. If he found the yarn fine, he would say to himself that Manchester was in danger. If he found the yarn rough, he would say Manchester had no cause to be anxious. He would not expect to find you dressed like sahibs; he would expect to find you dressed like the poor. He would expect to find you speaking your own language. When General Botha[1] went to England and there had occasion to meet the king, he refused to speak in English. He insisted on speaking in Tal, a dialect of Dutch. He conversed with the king through a Tal interpreter. It was not as though he did not know English; he could speak better English than I; but he considered it an honour to speak his own tongue. President Kruger[2] also used to refuse to converse in any language except Tal. That was the way they asserted their power. I therefore expect you to speak to me in Hindi, Urdu and Marathi. There is nothing unique in your securing a teacher who can speak fluent English. It would be creditable if you have a penniless, religious-minded and self-sacrificing teacher who can impart education through Hindi or Marathi. It would not matter if he is inferior to others in scholarship. I beg from you only one thing, namely, you should recognize the scope of the university and understand precisely what it stands for.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 14-9-1924

[1] 1862-1919; Boer General and statesman; first Prime Minister of the Transvaal, 1907, and of South African Union, 1910-19

[2] 1825-1904; Boer leader, President of the Transvaal, 1883-1900

60. *DISCUSSION WITH WORKERS AT POONA*

September 4, 1924

QUESTION: You have assigned only these three things to the Congress; will this not annul its political character?

GANDHIJI : Yes, for some time; but I am seeking suspension only for a year during which I am undertaking boycott of foreign cloth.

But you are asking for exclusion from the Congress of all those who do not spin. Would only those who do khadi work have a right to remain in the Congress? Why should those who undertake the other two items not have that right?

I am a soldier. I am speaking therefore with a grasp of the strategy of war. Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability do not involve bodily labour. They need propaganda and education. This work can be done extensively with a devout heart; whereas khadi work requires some exertion of the limbs over and above a devout heart. I wish to bind the workers and the people together with a common bond. The yarn produced by a spinning-wheel can alone be such a bond. If members of the Congress spin, crores of our countrymen will spin.

Does it not mean that those who sympathize with your other work should remain out of the Congress?

They may well help by staying out. Thousands of sympathizers have already been crowding before me. How do I benefit from them? I have to raise an army of workers spinning 2,000 yards of yarn a month. Won't you get time to spin 2,000 yards? Do you carry a greater burden of work than I do?

I shall repeat the question which I asked in the beginning. There is a grave risk of the Congress losing its political character for ever.

No, it will not. I cannot offer you a political programme unless you join the struggle today; but I say that as soon as you do this I shall put forward a political programme. I am not a saint; I am a politician. I am, however, a mild type of politician. Was I not a politician in South Africa? Did I join issue with General Smuts without political sagacity? I do want to fight; but my dear brother, let me whet my weapon.

You ask us to leave the Committees. How is that going to reduce bitterness?

If you leave them in a huff, bitterness would not go; but it will positively vanish if you leave with the intention of ending bitterness.

If someone is bent on opposing khadi and your creed, what will you do with him?

Nobody wants to do so, and if someone does, I shall not worry.

But if someone attacks your creed, what would you gain by abandoning the creed? A creed has to be defended by fighting.

My creed is so dynamic that no one can crush it. We should not give up the creed, we should leave the Committees if necessary.

If there are no Committees, we shall be crippled. With what authority shall we then function?

Try to think on a little higher level. You find that the Fergusson College is functioning side by side with your national institutions; does it depend on the Congress? To believe that one can work only with the support of the Congress is to display diffidence. You can do only as much work as is within your own power to do. What is the use of maintaining an instrument which consumes all your funds and energy in its mere upkeep? It is better to get rid of such an instrument. If an instrument comes in handy without much effort, we may well keep it. If it takes away all your strength, it is better that it slips out of your hand.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 14-9-1924

61. *SPEECH TO CONGRESS WORKERS, SURAT*

[*September 5, 1924*][1]

During his short stay of a few hours here, Gandhiji discussed with Congress workers local matters mainly relating to the coming Municipal elections and the state of national primary schools. He advised them to put forth and elect only those candidates who promised to support a national policy, and he asked them all to work unitedly though they might individually belong to different parties. With regard to the national schools Gandhiji stated that if the Congress people could not find sufficient funds to run them, they had better close them; but he was quite against the policy of borrowing loans for their maintenance.

The Bombay Chronicle, 16-9-1924

[1] Gandhiji visited Surat on his way to Ahmedabad from Bombay.

62. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SURAT*

September 5, 1924

Where are the unity, the vigour and the valour of Surat? Will these qualities revive so that from Surat they may spread to Gujarat and from Gujarat to India? When I see that things are not going the way I wish, that all my moves are proving wrong and that bitterness is mounting, how can I talk of boycott and civil disobedience? There is no problem of conflict between khadi and mill cloth at Surat. It has to think only of ways to increase the production of khadi. Therefore I tell you that public meetings cannot secure swaraj in this world. Swaraj demands hard back-breaking work. We do not carry out our household tasks by speeches, writings or sermons. A family can run smoothly only if every one of its members fulfils his allotted function. If we wish to attain freedom everyone should undertake back-breaking work.

Hindu-Muslim unity is within our grasp if one of the two parties becomes entirely truthful. If thoughts of revenge are harboured in the heart, then it would be right to give up all hopes of unity in our time. If we want swaraj, one of us must become truthful. It is said that the Hindu is timid and weak. But hatred is no remedy for cowardice. Both the communities are cowardly; and both are slaves on account of this cowardice. The Government looks upon both as slaves. Thus, in truth, not one but both are cowards and it is not possible to remove this cowardice if one is not peaceful. Of course, it should be the peacefulness of the brave. And is it necessary to wield a club in order to be brave? It is enough to learn to die. We hear of destruction of Hindu temples. How can a temple be protected if the priest runs away when it is being destroyed? You will ask me why you should crave before assailants and image-breakers. I would say you should protect the image by allowing yourself to be killed. If the assailant sees that you are prepared to protect the image by getting killed, he will come to his senses.

You cannot protect the image by killing others. Muslims also cannot protect Islam by killing Hindus. There is no doubt that Islam will perish if it seeks to preserve itself by killing others. No religion in the world can be protected by violence. After thirty years of experience and reflection I have come to realize that there is no way but non-violence to protect our religion and our

country. One who draws the sword perishes by it. No religion can or will at any time endure on the strength of the sword. Islam has survived on the strength of fakirs and Hinduism on that of the *tapasvis*[1]. The Hindu religion has produced *rishis*[2] and *munis*[3] who have unravelled the mystery of death. You should read your scriptures intelligently. Don't ask me to discuss the actions of Rama. Parvati practised austere devotion in forests; Draupadi saved herself from dishonour through her absolute devotion, while Dharmaraj Yudhishthira, mighty Bhima and Gandiva-carrying Arjuna stood as helpless spectators.

I can deliver this message to the Muslims through Maulana Abdul Bari Sahib[4] and the Ali Brothers; but being a Hindu, I have a right to address it to every Hindu. Hindus and Muslims have both lost faith in God today, have lost self-confidence and are aspiring to become brave with the help of gangsters. This will protect neither Hinduism nor Islam. Only austerity and poverty can save them. Throw off your cowardice. Jamnalalji's[5] hand was injured. It made me happy. If he had been killed while stopping the conflict, even then I would have been happy; because it would have been the true saving of the Hindu religion. He was suddenly hit by a stone. But one who goes and stands in the midst of a shower of stones may be not only hit but killed. If Jamnalalji had died, both the feuding groups would have felt ashamed and would have wept for him.

You should win the hearts of Muslims by such display of courage. I am not opposed to *akhadas* [gymnasiums]. You must have *akhadas* if your muscles are weak and you want to develop them; but not for resolving Hindu-Muslim conflicts. This solution must come through truth and penance. The author of the *Mahabharata* has a very significant sentence, namely, "place a thousand sacrifices in one scale of a balance and Truth in the other; the latter will weigh more." After a long experience of forty years I affirm that this is very true. When you win with the weapon of Truth, the Hindu-Muslim conflict will cease.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-9-1924

[1], [2] & [3] Sages

[4] Nationalist Muslim divine; took active part in the Khilafat movement

[5] Jamnalal Bajaj

63. *MESSAGE TO "SANJ VARTAMAN"*[1]

[Before *September 6, 1924*]

In wishing the Parsi readers of the *Sanj* happy new year, I can think of nothing but the ever-growing poverty of the masses of India from whom we, the literate classes, derive the means as well of our sustenance as of our enjoyments. It will be a false happiness if we shut our eyes to the facts that stare us in the face. Will the Parsi readers of the *Sanj* earn true happiness for the ensuing year? They cannot do better than turn their attention to the spinning-wheel and its produce. If they spin in the name of the motherland they will encourage the poor to do likewise and cheapen khadi. And if they use hand-spun khadi, they will help its sale.

The Bombay Chronicle, 6-9-1924

64. *TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA*[2]

SABARMATI,
[*September 6, 1924*]

PANDIT MALAVIYAJI
SIMLA

THANKS WIRE. SHALL WANT ALL YOUR HELP. COULD YOU ADVISE HINDUS DELHI ACCEPT TERMS SUGGESTED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10151

[1] For its Parsi New Year Number

[2] In reply to his telegram of September 5 which read: "Has been matter deep pain that in your last two months' discussion was not able be any help to you but rejoice in your decision. Is worthy of you. Hear you coming here. If so you will of course stay with me Shantikutir."

65. TELEGRAM TO MAHOMED ALI

September 6, 1924

MAULANA MAHOMED ALI
KUCHA CHELLAN
DELHI

JUST ARRIVED. WIRED MALAVIYAJI. HOPE YOU ARE WELL.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10151

66. LETTER TO GOPABANDHU DAS

September 6, 1924

DEAR GOPABANDHU BABU,

I have your letter. If . . . and the others who have misappropriated public funds have means I should unhesitatingly advise law suit. The boycott is not for our hurt. We may lose all private property, but we must defend trust property. I advised Niranjan Babu to take proceedings and resign. He can be re-elected. I hope you are quite all right now. Amritlal Thakkar[1] tells me your school is in want. Please write to Jamnalalji.

Yours sincerely,
M.K.G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Amritlal Vithaldas Thakkar (1896-1951); engineer; life member of the Servants of India Society; devoted himself later to the cause of Harijans

67. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

SABARMATI,
September 6, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I received your letter yesterday in Surat. To your telegram I sent a brief reply[1] from Bombay. I sent a brief wire yesterday in reply to your letter. I am sorry my letter gave you offence. Pray forgive me. Was it not better that I told you what I heard than that I should have kept it to myself? Will you please believe me when I tell you that those who surround me hardly ever speak to me? . . .[2]

My offer however stands to be considered on its merits. Will you please consider it and oblige me? As you know I have already discussed it with Mrs. Besant and Messrs Jayakar and Natarajan[3]. I have also discussed it with the Swarajists in Poona.

Whether it is accepted or not my decision is final that I shall not directly or indirectly be the cause of dividing the Congress by a vote. Whatever happens must be by agreement.

M.K.G.

PS.

I have your wire. I need hardly add anything to the foregoing.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] *Vide* "Telegram to Motilal Nehru", On or after 2-9-1924.
[2] Some lines have been omitted here in the source.
[3] Editor, *Indian Social Reformer*

68. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

September 6, 1924

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your wire. I had heard from Father already. I am so sorry. I thought I was writing a harmless letter showing the depth of my feeling . . . .[1]

I have therefore implored Father to let me have his views on the merits of the proposal. I have discussed it with many friends among the Swarajists. I can see no other honourable solution of the difficulty. Please tell me what you think about it.

The Nabha answer[2] is from its own standpoint conclusive. The only answer that can be returned is to take up the challenge to be arrested. In the present state of things it seems to be unwise. The best thing, therefore, is to be silent and wait for better times. . . .[3] I have your very prompt report on Amethi. It makes very painful reading. I do not know what to do. I have sent Shwaib and Kristodas to Gulbarga also privately to ascertain facts. Do please go to Nabha as soon as you can. You may take Hayat and Moazzam. They should know the place. As M. has not been able to make headway it is difficult to try anything regarding my movement. I am here at least till Monday.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

69. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

September 6, 1924

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

I do not know if your mind keeps pace with the swift changes that have come over me. I see as clearly as daylight that we must not resist the evil that has crept into our ranks. We must abdicate power altogether. If we have faith in our mission and if the mission is intrinsically good, we must succeed. We must risk even present injury to the movement. There should be no decision by majority

[1] & [3] Some lines have been omitted here in the source.

[2] *Vide* "Notes", 11-9-1924, under the sub-title, "A Lame Reply".

of votes. We must continue to surrender up to the very margin of principle. Hence I am putting forward the programme of charkha, untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity.

What is this row about your attempt to have a penal clause in your spinning resolution? My heart goes out to you in your difficulties. Do let the local control go, if it costs all that energy. Or is the storm all over now?

Have you studied the working of Devdhar's Relief Committee? Can you amalgamate with him? What is the nature of his work? I would advise you to try to have one non-official committee only if possible. Monies are pouring in. Do you want me to send all to you? What about South Canara? What about the different centres? There is a terrific amount of clothing lying here. Pray give me detailed instructions. I am here till Monday at the least. But it is probable that I shall be here for at least a week.

Yours,
M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

70. *LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ*

[September 6, 1924][1]

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have both your telegram and your letter. During my journey to Bombay, Poona and Surat I did not have a moment in which to write. I reached the Ashram this morning.

That you have been hurt does not make me unhappy in the least. I think many of us will have to sacrifice ourselves. The venom [of hatred] is rife and dishonesty has spread so much that many clean people will have to be offered up as sacrifice in order to escape from this calamity. Try to find the root of this quarrel. Are there no sensible Muslims or sensible Hindus who can understand and remove the causes of these conflicts?

You must have known my resolves. I have decided not to settle any important thing in Belgaum through a vote. Vindictiveness has grown so strong that we must stop at once large-

[1] Gandhiji reached the Ashram on September 6 and awaited a call from Mahomed Ali to go to Delhi.

scale, active satyagraha. If we don't, I fear, it may be the end of us. No single thing is taken in the right spirit. Everything is misunderstood. There is suspicion all around. At such a time we should remain steadfast and watch in silence what others do. I have done a lot of explaining in *Young India*. I do not know how much of it has been translated in *Navajivan*.

I hope your hand is now completely all right. I shall be here till I get a telegram or letter from Maulana Mahomed Ali.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2850

71. *MY NOTE*

PROPAGATION OF KHADI

The Khadi Bhandar on Princess Street, formerly run as his own by Shri Jerajani, has now been taken over by the All-India Khadi Board, which proposes to expand it. Securities required for the take-over have been received. The purpose of the take-over is to store in and sell from a central depot the surplus stocks of khadi from the country's output lying unsold in the provinces. This kind of assistance was formerly rendered by Gujarat, but this has since been discontinued in view of the Gujarat Provincial Committee's decision to develop the local trade. Every type of khadi can therefore be had from this Bhandar. Saris worn by the women of the South can be had, as also dhotis of full width which were formerly not available in khadi. The scheme recently launched for the organization of this Bhandar deserves all encouragement. Anyone can become a member by paying an annual subscription of one rupee. It is the responsibility of the Manager to issue a folder detailing the varieties and prices of the khadi and distribute it among the members. Members are entitled to a discount of one pice in a rupee on their purchases. Thus if during one year a member buys khadi worth 64 rupees he saves a rupee. But it is not desirable that members should join with this narrow aim in view; one should join because one wants to encourage khadi. A member should obtain the folder on the progress of the industry and keeping himself informed circulate the information among the public. The fourth issue of the said pamphlet carries two instructions which are useful. During the monsoon season clothes do not dry soon, more particularly khadi

clothes. To get over this inconvenience we should put up two clothes-lines, instead of the usual single one, at a distance of [say] two feet, and spread the clothes over both, so that the ends do not cling together, and thus allow sufficient air to pass over the clothes which will now dry sooner. The other instruction pertains to the washing of the khadi cap. A cap loses its shape if wrung in this process, and even stitches may come off at the seams. But if left to dry after being rubbed without wringing and then pressed between the hands after being folded twice or thrice, it will not be creased and retain its shape. It is true in this way all the water cannot be squeezed out; however, a cap can be used for three days, during which time the washed one can dry. If, instead of being crushed between the hands, it is compressed between clean smooth planks and the entire water is wrung out, the cap will on drying stay stiff. Those who go in for white khadi must not wear even slightly soiled clothes. We shall enjoy the very act of washing, once we get used to it. One does not have to spend much time over it and one gets the additional satisfaction of doing one's own laundering. Obviously, white clothes require frequent washing. The poor man who prefers a black jacket cannot afford to depend on a dhobi; he must acquire the habit of doing his own washing.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 7-9-1924

72. *TESTING YARN*

The All-India Khadi Board tested the yarn collected by them and I give below[1] the results which are interesting and instructive.

Next month all provinces should kindly send the correct registration numbers of the yarn of members and of other individuals.

Some provinces addressed their parcels to Ahmedabad [railway] station; this caused waste of time and money. All [parcels] are to be addressed to Sabarmati Station. Moreover all the parcels are to be marked "To pay" and no one should fail to remit the amount either in stamps or by money order.

It is a matter of pride for all of us that an eighteen-year-old Bengali girl gets the first prize. This may not interest some

[1] Not translated here; *vide* "Under the Test", 4-9-1924.

and some others may consider it trivial, but for me it has a significance. I would not have dreamt Darbar Saheb Gopaldas topping the list from Gujarat. I congratulate him. Similar is the case with Pandit Jawaharlal and his wife. From the United Provinces the names of these two and Shri Purushottamdas Tandon shine out. It should be noted that Pandit Jawaharlal has sent 4,000 yards of yarn in spite of his heavy burden of work. This should encourage other workers.

It is not surprising that Gujarat ranks first in terms of overall numbers and quality. What is surprising is that in comparison with its population very few names have been received even from Gujarat. By now thousands of expert spinners, men and women, should have become active in this region where there are many instructors and where much attention is paid to developing the craft of spinning.

This is one side.

The satisfaction that the largest number hails from Gujarat is the other side. More yarn is obtained from places where more work is put in. Gujarat leads in this effort and hence its output of yarn is the highest. Again, the paucity [of spinners] indicates that the country has not yet realized the importance of spinning and that the craft has not yet become as popular as it ought to be.

Results of the next month may throw more light.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-9-1924

73. BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF DADABHAI NAOROJI

The birth anniversary of the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, fell on 4th September; but the National Women's Council arranged the function on the 30th August to suit my convenience since I had to be present in Poona on the 4th. Dadabhai led the life of a *rishi*. I have many sacred memories of him. This Grand Old Man of India was, and continues to be, one of the great men who have moulded my life. I think the memories that I recounted before the sisters are worth being reported to the readers.

I had the privilege to see Dadabhai in 1888 for the first time. A friend of my father's had given me a letter of introduction to him, and it is worth noting that this friend was not at all acquainted with Dadabhai. He, however, took it for granted

that anyone from the public could write to such a saintly person. In England, I found that Dadabhai came in contact with all students. He was their leader and attended their gatherings. Ever since, I have seen his life flowing in the same rhythm till the end. I was in South Africa for twenty years, and exchanged hundreds of letters with Dadabhai during the period. I was astonished at the regularity with which his replies came. My letters used to be typed, but I do not remember any typed reply from him. The replies were all in his own hand, and moreover, as I came to know subsequently, he would himself make copies of his letters on a tissue-paper book. I could find that most of my letters were replied to by the return of post. Whenever I met him I tasted nothing but love and sweetness. Dadabhai would talk to me exactly like a father to a son, and I have heard from others that their experience was the same as mine. The thought uppermost in his mind all the time was how India could rise and attain her freedom. My first acquaintance with the extent of Indian poverty was through Dadabhai's book[1]; I learnt from that book itself that about three crores of men in our country are half-starved. Today this number has increased. His simplicity was without limit. It so happened that someone criticized him in 1908. I found it extremely intolerable and yet I was unable to prove that it was wrong. I was troubled by many doubts. I thought that it was sinful to entertain doubts about a great patriot like Dadabhai. Therefore I sought an appointment and went to see him with the consent of the critic. That was the first time I went to his private office. It was made up of a very small room with only two chairs. I entered. He asked me to sit in a vacant chair but I went and sat near his feet. He saw distress on my face and questioned me, asking me to speak out whatever weighed on my mind. With great hesitation I reported to him the criticisms of his detractors and said, "I was troubled by doubts on hearing these things and, because I worship you, I consider it a sin to keep them back." Smilingly, he asked me, "What reply do I give you? Do you believe this thing?" His manner, his tone and the pain that was so apparent in his words, were enough for me. I said, "I do not now want to hear anything more. I have no trace of a doubt left in me." Even then he told me many things relating to this matter, which it is not necessary to recapitulate here. After this event I realized that Dadabhai was an Indian living in the simple style of a fakir. A

[1] *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*

fakir's style does not imply that a man should not have even a farthing; but Dadabhai had forsaken the luxuries and standards which other people of his stratum were enjoying during those days.

I myself and many others like me have learnt the lessons of regularity, single-minded patriotism, simplicity, austerity and ceaseless work from this venerable man. At a time when criticism of the Government was considered sedition and hardly anyone dared to speak the truth, Dadabhai criticized the Government in the severest terms and boldly pointed out the shortcomings of the administration. I have absolutely no doubt that the people of India will remember Dadabhai affectionately as long as India endures as an entity in the world.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 7-9-1924

74. *BOMBAY'S BENEVOLENCE*

I know Bombay has quite a few vices and a lot of filth too. The citizens' greed for money is rife. Nevertheless I have always experienced a certain generosity and guilelessness in Bombay's atmosphere, compared to other places. It is said that since I am better acquainted with Bombay I feel this way, but this may not be correct. Bombay usually leads in its contribution to any fund raised anywhere. Even for Malabar the aid from Bombay has been abundant. More than four thousand rupees could be collected by the mere sale of tickets for the conference organized by the Parsi Political Association, and contributions at the end of the conference may equal this amount. Contributors have seen to it that the amount may exceed but will certainly not fall short of the expected sum. Bombay's trade, at present, is undergoing a severe depression but the citizens continue to give with their usual generosity.

Why so? It is my belief that this is a consequence of Parsi benevolence. Readers might say that I tend to lose my balance in favour of the side towards which I am inclined. I do not think so. Parsi benevolence is quite well known. It has also been noticed that Hindus and Muslims from other places are not as free with their purses as those from Bombay. But the Parsis have established a tradition of supporting public causes and, I believe, the other communities emulate them. After comparing figures of

donations by the different communities, Shri Donde maintains that the Parsis surpass all other communities of the world.

But in writing about the benevolence of the citizens of Bombay and its causes my one intention is to draw more out of them. I expect from the citizens of Bombay contributions in the form of yarn. It is not enough if the Parsis, Hindus and Muslims give away cash. They might as well contribute half an hour's labour. Might not men and women forget their routine for half an hour and, spinning in the name of God, offer the yarn to the country? The Parsis, in order to take the lead in contributing yarn, may put in manual labour and others who want to help them may come out with cash from their savings; and now whose contribution will be held higher in the Almighty's accounts? Certainly, this spinning is for the sake of the poor in India. This [yarn] can be woven into khadi and sold. But the real purpose behind this manual work is to serve as an example for the poor. This purpose, I would appeal to cosmopolitan Bombay to fulfil.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-9-1924

75. *TWO OLD BOOKS*

Bhai Karsandas Chitalia has presented me two very good old books which he had secured from a Parsi sister. Both of them were litho-printed in 1828, they are bound in leather and carry on the fly-leaf the following superscription in golden letters: "Presented to Dinshaw Bhikaji by Major-General Sir Malcom." This Englishman was then the head of the Education Board. The book treats of Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and Book-keeping. Gujarati translations from English books have been done by George Jarvis Engineer with the assistance of Jagannath Shastri Mawant. This book is an evidence of the missionary spirit and liberality of Englishmen of the older generations. The script of the book is *Devanagari*. Maybe this was done with the express intention of making *Devanagari* the common script. The letters are as beautiful as pearls and there are many lucid tables filled with figures. One might say that we can read the first chapter of our educational history in these books. The terminology used then has remained nearly the same till today, it could not be changed even slightly after all these many years. Since they were

written with the help of a Maharashtrian scholar, a few changes like *pujya* for *shunya*, *jabab* for *jawab* are noticeable.

In this age of printing presses and rotary machines, we can hardly imagine how hard the pioneers had to labour. These books are witnesses to that hard work.

These books will be deposited in the collection of the archaeological museum. If any brothers or sisters possess similar old books which are not in actual use, I would suggest their being deposited in the archaeological museum.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-9-1924

76. LETTER TO RAJA OF KANIKA

SABARMATI,
September 7, 1924

DEAR RAJA SAHIB,

I am now sending you copies of two statements my secretary has prepared for me. You will observe that if the facts are as set forth in the statements which have been prepared from the papers in my possession, they require personal investigation. Will you entertain the idea of my sending to your Raj Mr. Andrews or Rajendrababu or Pandit Jawaharlal? I would love to go there myself, but my hands are just now tied up.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RAJA SAHIB OF KANIKA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

77. LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI

September 8, 1924

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It is now just after five, Monday morning. I have commenced to use ink but somehow or other the hand has not yet settled down to the ink pen yet. And I want to talk to you without avoidable impediment.

Only yesterday I realized what you wanted. Remember that though I have been successfully at the head of two Presses, I know next to nothing of the details. I have not yet been to the *Navajivan* office. I never knew what was brought from Delhi and what was not. I thought I was bringing something that was mine. Now I am sending something that is yours. What is mine is yours—Swami[1] included. But where he fails, or you find him wanting, you should fall back upon me. I cannot supply his ability, but I shall find the money somehow, if money can make up for lost time. I believe Swami when he tells me he could not have managed to send you the machines earlier. Why can you not have both *Comrade*[2] and *Hamdard*[3] printed elsewhere for the time being and ask me to find the deficit?

Swami says the Press will take time to set up in all its details. He says he never understood that he was to put up everything. He thought, and I too, that he was wanted for the machines only. He says he was not willing to cart all the furniture here. Neither he nor his agent had the requisite knowledge at the time. The agent who actually took delivery knew very little of Press things.

But the point is not what A or B understood but what you need, and what I can do. Even whilst I was in Delhi I did not understand that the sole delay was due to the delay caused on my side. I thought that even after the machines had been set up there were many things that had to be done in Delhi by you before we could make a start.

Now please use Swami freely. After all he is among those who are the closest to me. If he fails, I have failed. A man who is no judge of men is a failure even though he may have a heart of gold and may have the best of intentions in the world. He must

[1] Swami Anandananda, manager, Navajivan Press

[2] & [3] English and Urdu journals, edited by Mahomed Ali

then cease to deal with men and things. I have therefore always said that I must be judged by the test my closest campanions pass through. You, Swami, Mahadev, Hayat, Ashfaq, Moazzam, Devdas, Krishnadas, Shwaib are among them. It is not enough that I can pull on well with you; Swami, Mahadev, Devdas, etc., also ought. If they cannot, they should disappear from my public life even as Ba has, at any rate, for the present. They are the instruments through which I work, as Hayat, Moazzam are the ones through whom you work.

I am therefore sending Swami so that you and he can come near each other and know each other better. For me a proper regulation of these personal relations means more for swaraj and unity than a thousand public documents.

With deepest love,

Yours,
M. K. G.

TO
MAHOMED ALI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

78. LETTER TO SATISH CHANDRA MUKERJEE

September 8, 1924

DEAR SATISH BABU,

I was deeply touched by your wire. I am sending you a consoling reply.

No one has displaced or wishes to displace Kristodas. I still cannot do without him. Last time Kristodas did not accompany me because he and I came to the conclusion that it was the best for him and the cause. He is the wisest among the four who are rendering personal service and doing secretarial work. Mahadev, Devdas and Pyarelal regard him as more advanced in wisdom and *tapasya* than they. I wonder what led Kristodas to think that any of them could ever think of ousting Kristodas. I do not need four with me in my travels. One at least must remain behind to attend to affairs. Only Mahadev or Devdas can constantly remain behind if only because neither Pyarelal nor Kristodas can attend to *Navajivan* and the Gujarati correspondence. Kristodas must therefore be a constant companion with me. He has gone to Gulbarga because he alone was acceptable to Shwaib,

The latter would have taken Mahadev with him, if I had insisted. But I know him to be very sensitive. I wanted him to go under the best of auspices. And when he asked for Kristodas although Mahadev was suggested, I unhesitatingly agreed. Kristodas was willing. He and Shwaib hit it off well together. Pray therefore do not be anxious about Kristodas. He shall be with me not merely for your sake. He will be with me for my sake. I am more anxious to have him by me than you can be to put him by me. It has been the privilege of my life to have some companions whom I have felt honoured and comforted to have by me. Kristodas is not the least among them.

I have written this with your pen. The first you sent me I prized very much and always kept with me. In the jail, I lent it to Indulal. It got spoiled. He sent it out for repairs. The friend whom he entrusted with the precious charge lost it. Kristodas has therefore given me the one I am using. I have also received two print orders. May I thank you for all these delicate attentions? Add one more by wiring a promise never more to worry about Kristodas.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 5597

79. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Bhadarva Sud 10 [September 8, 1924][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your two letters. I did not reply to the first one as it was not clear where you were staying. You should keep very well there. Recover your health completely. Nothing has been decided yet about my journey. I shall know about it during the course of this week.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIMATI VASUMATI PANDIT
C/o MR. AMBALAL MATHURADAS
MESSRS STRAUSS & CO.
BATALA
PUNJAB

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 455. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] The date of receipt has been noted as 12-9-1924.

80. LETTER TO ANANDANANDA

ASHRAM,
September 8, 1924

BHAI ANANDANANDA,

You are going to Delhi not as Angada on behalf of Ramachandra, or as Krishna on behalf of Yudhishthira. You are going on behalf of Nishadaraja to do some service [to Rama] or to get his [Rama's] permission for the former washing his feet. Or just as a servant of Sudama going out into the world would have done credit to him, in a similar way you also are going there to do credit to me. You are not going to seek justice but to render justice. Whatever befell Jadabharat, he suffered it calmly. You are going not as Rudra, but as Vishnu. The question is not what the Maulana should do, but what I, i.e., you should do. It is my firm resolve to put into practice and use here to the letter all the philosophy that I have been propounding in *Navajivan*. You will assist me in this whole-heartedly. Do it believing that such action alone would become us. I needs must do here what I am at present advising people to do. We must do Mahomed Ali's work even if that meant further loss to *Young India* and *Navajivan*. What better thing can there be than that the very first issue of his paper should be published by your hand? Consider the *Comrade*, the *Hamdard* as your own or my own. You are going there, thinking that they come first and *Navajivan* and *Young India* after them. The key to Hindu-Muslim unity, that is to swaraj, lies, it seems to me, in the sincere humility and tact that you will show. Do not even think of returning from Delhi in a hurry.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

81. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Bhadarva Sud 12 [September 10, 1924][1]

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I hope your hand is now completely all right. You must have got my previous letter[2]. A great many changes are taking place in my thinking. A full picture of these will appear in the coming issue of *Young India*. My feeling at present at any rate is that we should not win a majority through votes. If at Belgaum we do not get, without any special effort, the scope to work from within the Congress, we should leave the Congress and do whatever work we can. I see no other way to remove the poison which is at present pervading the atmosphere. I am sure we will somehow overcome it. I am awaiting a telegraphic call from Delhi. If I have to go there, it is likely that some solution for the Hindu-Muslim problem will be found.

I have not yet come to know the cause of the riots there.

I have just gone through the speeches of Ghatwai. If he has spoken as reported, my congratulations to him were misplaced. They were far from non-violence.

It is good that Balkrishna[3] has arrived there. He is welcome to stay there if he wishes to. Please pass on the enclosed letter to him. Will you too come in October?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : G.N. 2851

82. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Bhadarva Sud 12 [September 10, 1924][4]

It is quite natural that Chi. Taramati's[5] illness should make you unhappy, but it should become natural for us not to be unhappy over such matters. Why should we be unhappy knowing

[1] From the reference to the prospective Congress session at Belgaum
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Jamnalal Bajaj", 6-9-1924.
[3] Balkrishna N. Bhave, an inmate of the Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati
[4] As in the source
[5] Addressee's wife

that enduring our lot unperturbed is our duty? It does not mean that we are unfeeling if we do not become unhappy over such matters. Those who have a right to expect service from you, why should there be any drawback in serving them? Taramati will surely recover from this illness. But I still wish that her delivery should take place in a good place. Take Dalal's advice if necessary. Comfort Anand. Inform me daily about her condition.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, pp. 74-5

83. LETTER TO TARAMATI MATHURADAS

Bhadarva Sud 12 [*September 10, 1924*][1]

It is only today I got a letter telling me of your illness. Please do not worry at all. Resolve to get well and keep on repeating *Ramanama*. It will lessen the grief on account of your illness and may cure the malady as well. A lot of work has still to be taken from you. Get well and do write to me. May God give you long life.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 75

84. NOTES

The Coming Fifteenth

The second month of spinning will soon be upon us. The spinners for the first month, representatives and others, were 2,780. Legitimate excuses have been received from many places and persons. Some did not even know that non-representatives had to send yarn at all. The second month therefore should see very considerable improvement in all the provinces. Will all the spinners bear the following in mind?

1. To send uniform yarn. Whenever good cotton and good slivers are procurable, attempt should be made not to spin below 20 counts. The same spinners have sent a variety of counts. Let every spinner bear in mind that counts cannot be mixed for weaving purposes.

[1] As in the source

2. Each hank should be no more than 500 yards. Each hank should be divided into strands of 100 yards as nearly as may be and properly leased, i.e., tied with a strong string. This is very essential for weavers who have to undo the hanks and wind the yarn on bobbins. If the yarn is all in a tangle, it is almost impossible to unwind it. Leases are intended to enable the bobbin-winder to trace a missing thread without difficulty. He can do so easily if he has to search only 100 threads at a time.

3. It will advance the durability of yarn if it is sprayed before taking it off the winder.

4. The number of yards and weight and count should be noted on each hank of uniform yarn. The way to find the count easily is to divide the yards by 21 and its weight in *tolas*. Thus if a hank of 840 yards weighs one *tola*, the yarn is $\frac{840}{21 \times 1} = 40$ counts. If its weight be ½ *tola* the yarn is $\frac{840 \times 2}{21 \times 1} = 80$ counts. Needless to say, in finding counts fractions should be ignored.

5. Members have been found to send unwound yarn pulled off the spindle. It is most difficult to treat it after it is so pulled off. If it is to be of use for weaving it must be hanked and properly leased as advised above.

It may be stated here that one or two spinners have not hesitated to send mill-spun yarn. I hope that these gentlemen have done so not knowing what they had to do. There is no difficulty in detecting mill-spun yarn. The virtue lies not in sending any yarn but in sending good even yarn of one's own spinning.

All parcels should be sent to Sabarmati and not to Ahmedabad and should be sent carriage paid.

Some More Figures

Since the publication of the returns of yarn, more parcels have been received from Andhra and Tamilnad which show that the response in both these provinces is much better than appeared from the figures already published. The Andhra total is 487, the Tamilnad total is 195.

The total weight of yarn received was 23 maunds and 23 pounds. Of this Gujarat contributed 13 maunds and the other provinces the rest. The highest count reached was 100—not a bad record. Our mills do not spin with rare exceptions more than 40 counts. The spinners should remember that when labour is voluntary, it means a great saving of money to spin fine counts. Thus if a spinner spins 20 counts instead of 10, he would save almost half the price of cotton. It would be well therefore to attempt

finer counts as soon as the fingers and the eyes are sufficiently trained.

According to religion over 40 Mussalmans and as many Parsis have sent in their quota. There are some Christians too to be found in the names. Of the A.I.C.C. members 104 have sent in their quota. Of the Working Committee all but 3 have sent in their quota. Of the most noted ones outside the A.I.C.C. to send are Maulana Abdul Bari Sahib and Acharya P. C. Ray.

Non-representatives

It is not yet generally realized that, whilst it is obligatory on Congress representatives to spin regularly, the others who believe in the virtue of spinning are not free from that duty. The A.I.C.C. resolution is but an indication of what every patriot should do. If therefore all the provinces would organize themselves for voluntary spinning, they will soon find that the boycott of foreign cloth is a comparatively simple matter. The two obstacles in the way are said to be the dearness and the coarseness of khaddar. Both these can be completely disposed of, immediately spinning becomes a labour of love—not a very great price to pay for achieving a purpose for which we have been striving ever since the days of the late Shastri Chiplunkar and the Bengal partition. Nor need members wait for the provincial committees to organize spinning. Any person with sufficient knowledge and energy may organize a spinning club. It requires very little outlay of money. A little storing of cotton, preparing and distribution of slivers and collecting yarn is all that is required. Not much space is required. The poorest can attempt the work. The wheelless spinning answers where a spinning-wheel is unobtainable. I hope therefore that not only will the second month's returns show a marked rise in the number of representatives spinning, but that there will be a great increase in the returns from non-representatives.

The Right Thing

It was a fortunate thing that Sheth Jamnalalji found himself in the midst of the Hindu-Muslim fighting last week. The injury sustained by him was probably one of the causes if not the cause that arrested the progress of the fight. I understand that Babu Kali Charan, the secretary of the local Congress Committee and Mr. Avari were also trying to prevent the fight at great personal risk. I congratulate these three workers on their courage and sanity. It may be necessary for some of us to lose our lives so that we may gain lasting peace. It is not to be attained within

our generation by organizing the worst elements of society against one another. Such mutual strife is a process of exhaustion. And peace obtained by it is an armed peace requiring prolonged fighting.

VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

I tender my congratulations to the Maharani Regent of Travancore on her generosity in releasing all the satyagrahi prisoners. It is a pretty custom for a State to release a certain number of prisoners on a new head occupying the gadi. What can be more natural than that those prisoners who have no criminal taint in them should be released? I tender too my congratulations to the satyagrahis on suspending satyagraha for the time being. It paves the way for an understanding and enables the State authorities to review their attitude towards the satyagrahis without embarrassment. It has been stated that the late Maharaja, most enlightened though he was in many matters, held very orthodox views on untouchability. Let me hope that H.H. the Maharani Regent will recognize that untouchability is no credit to Hinduism, but that it is a serious blot upon it. The best service that a Hindu State can render to Hinduism is to rid it of the curse and set an example in liberalism to the Hindus of British India. The satyagrahis will, I doubt not, make the way of the authorities smooth by continuing their self-restraint and making it clear that they do not want anything more than a recognition of the most elementary human rights for the unapproachables and the untouchables.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

I have a long letter from Hubli protesting against my alleged indifference to the formation of national volunteers. I hasten to assure my correspondent and others that I am not indifferent. I hold it to be most essential work. I have great admiration for Dr. Hardikar's ability in the matter. But my difficulty is that we have not men enough to organize the whole of India. I have therefore suggested that Dr. Hardikar should simply concentrate on one province or a district and make the corps of that area thoroughly efficient. Then there should be no difficulty in organizing the other areas. It is work which cannot be done by newspaper propaganda but by silent unremitting toil. The same week that brought me the Hubli letter brought me another from Almora. The writer says: "The boy scout movement is spreading, but very few become national volunteers." Why? Because

that movement is efficiently organized. Nothing that the boy scouts do has superior merit to what we are supposed to do. But we have not enough organizers fitted for the task. The nation wants drilling, discipline, education and takes it from wherever it comes. I know that it is bad, it betrays want of discrimination. But the nation does not mind the enslavement so long as it gets the thing it thinks it needs. What we the workers who realize the mischief have to do is to give the training ourselves. But we cannot do so by writing or speaking. We must first train ourselves. There are many things to do. Let each one of us choose our task and stick to it through thick and thin. Let us not think of the vastness. But let us pick up that portion which we can handle best. Let there be no mistake that though I do not write about volunteering I am not watching it properly. And whether I am president or not, I am hoping that, of the many attractions that Karnatak has in store for us in December, its volunteer corps will not be the least among them.

A Bad Comparison

A Roman Catholic correspondent who occupies the position of the secretary of a Catholic Indian Association has written a long letter from which I take the following extracts:

> Time and again I have noticed letters appearing under flaring captions in the nationalist Press, drawing a comparison between your life and activities, and that of Christ. But writers of these letters not contenting themselves with this achievement of theirs, have gone one step further and have held up "Gandhiji" as "the modern Jesus" (!) to the people of India. I was wondering how far they would go, and these letters which flooded the Press during your incarceration, stopped awhile; but with your release they have revived. Rejoinders have proved ineffective and that is why I am writing this letter to you.
>
> Could you look with complacency on this devotion and loyalty bordering on insanity? Nobody denies that you are a great man in your own way; even your opponents grant you that. But you are not God, at any rate I have not discovered you claiming divinity till now. You are preaching politics and not religion. Besides, you are a married man with wife and children. How then is it possible for these blind admirers to see in your life and work any resemblance to that of Christ? I thought that perhaps the doctrine of non-violence of which you are such a noble champion has led them to draw this comparison. But even here you are an ardent nationalist advocating ahimsa in politics as a means to an end. Christ on the other hand not only refused to plunge into politics, asking all to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" but lived and

> felt and spoke in terms of humanity, transcending by His very nature the cramping and narrow limitations of race and nationalism. He showed also in the most unmistakable manner that "physical force" for a righteous cause was not at all incompatible with the sublime doctrines He preached. Here again I fail to see the boasted "likeness and resemblance".
>
> So it is only natural for me to ask you what you think of all that these writers have written about you.

The pain that the writer feels over the comparison is obvious. In answer to his question I may repeat what I have said before that I do not like these comparisons at all. They serve no useful purpose and cause unnecessary hurt to the feelings of the devotees of the masters with whose life mine is compared. I lay claim to nothing exclusively divine in me. I do not claim prophetship. I am but a humble seeker after Truth and bent upon finding It. I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. The whole of my activity, whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical, is directed to that end. And as I know that God is found more often in the lowliest of His creatures than in the high and mighty, I am struggling to reach the status of these. I cannot do so without their service. Hence my passion for the service of the suppressed classes. And as I cannot render this service without entering politics, I find myself in them. Thus I am no master. I am but a struggling, erring, humble servant of India and therethrough of humanity.

A Lame Reply

It will be remembered that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the Administrator of Nabha on the 25th July telling him that he knew nothing of any conditions being applied to his and Acharya Gidwani's and Pandit Santanam's discharge before the expiry of their sentence. It has taken the Administrator twenty-seven days to send the following reply:

> I would refer you to your letter dated the 25th July last. I may mention that you are under a misapprehension with regard to the meaning of the word "suspension". The suspension of a sentence obviously implies conditions. If this were not the case and if your argument was sound, the suspension of a sentence without the mention of any conditions would be equivalent to remission which is obviously incorrect.
>
> Under these circumstances I see no good purpose in continuing this correspondence.

It is all very well to lecture to Pandit Jawaharlal on the meaning of the word "suspension". Unfortunately for the Ad-

ministrator however the Pandit did not ask him to tell him what the word "suspension" meant but he wanted to know why he was not told of the conditions of his discharge. Is not a prisoner entitled to know the conditions of his discharge upon "suspension" of his sentence? May the Administrator be also informed that a remission may also carry conditions? Thus Mr. Savarkar's[1] sentence has been remitted subject to conditions. The Administrator's reply therefore carries with it its own condemnation, because it proves by implication that the Pandit was not informed of the conditions of the suspension of his sentence. And to all intents and purposes he is even now ignorant of the conditions. Thus is he liable to be imprisoned under the old sentence if he enters the Nabha territory even after the completion of two years after the date of his sentence? The Administrator may "see no good purpose in continuing this (the) correspondence". But the public is entitled to know not only the conditions of "suspension" but what is more important, whether it is not a fact that Pandit Jawaharlal and his companions were not informed of any conditions being attached to their discharge and whether, if that be so, the imprisonment of Acharya Gidwani can be justified on any ground whatsoever.

A Worthy Example

I take the following from a *communique* of the S.G.P.C.[2] (20-8-24):

> For a long time past there had been going on a dispute between the Sikhs and Mussalmans of village Kachha, Tahsil Kasur, over the question of the Mussalmans' right to call prayers in the local mosque, so much so that the question had been dragged to courts of law who had decided the issue against the Mussalmans. The result was that Mussalman villagers could not say the call to prayers. On 10th and 11th August when the *jatha* of 500 Akalis, bound for Bhai Pheru, sojourned in that village the Mussalman brothers laid this matter before it and appealed for a favourable consideration. The *jatha* recognizing the principle of freedom of religious worship for all sections of societies decided that Sikhs should not stand in the way of free religious worship of any community, and that the Mussalmans were therefore free to make calls for prayers. The Sikh *sangat* of the village respectfully bowed to this decision of the *jatha*

[1] V. D. Savarkar (1883-1966); revolutionary; social reformer; leader of Hindu Mahasabha; Marathi poet, playwright and orator; author of *The War of Independence*

[2] Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee

and expressed their regret for what had taken place in the past and at the same time contributed Rs. 20/- for the repairs of the mosque. The order of the *jatha* was given effect to forthwith and thus was brought to an amicable settlement a long-standing dispute which the courts of law helped only to aggravate. The Mussalman brethren then thanked the *jatha* for this act of sheer justice and by way of their appreciation of the act sent in a musical band which played in the *jatha*'s camp for five long hours at a stretch.

I congratulate both the Sikhs and the Mussalmans concerned on the happy end of their dispute. It is most noteworthy that the Sikhs gave up a right which the courts had decided in their favour. Who that has experience of courts of law does not know that through no fault often of their own they often give decisions that are contrary to justice and common sense? They can take no note of sentiment or prejudices. But in religious disputes unfortunately these are the most important factors. Such cases therefore can be justly decided only by arbitrators who will consider it their duty to take note of every factor that can contribute to a just and honourable peace between parties.

Fraud by Congressmen

In poor Orissa some so-called Congressmen are reported to have misappropriated Congress funds to the extent of several thousand rupees. One man had adopted the role of an ascetic and appeared to be working so zealously that he began to command influence and confidence till at last he was appointed to a position of trust. The question of dealing with the fraud became very serious and still remains so. The matter was referred to me and I had no hesitation in advising proceedings and suggesting that the Congress official who trusted the defaulter should after finishing the case resign office if necessary for breach of the boycott resolution. This boycott of law-courts cannot be allowed to be used by so-called Congressmen to defraud the Congress itself. Private parties if they are non-co-operators may beware of engagements that may involve them in law suits. But as between Congressmen and as regards Congress affairs, in other words in matters of trust, it will defeat the very purpose of the boycott if unscrupulous people under cover of the boycott sought by belonging to the Congress to defraud the institution itself. At the risk therefore of being considered inconsistent I have no hesitation whatsoever in advising the Congress officials in Orissa to take legal proceedings against the culprits for the recovery of trust funds and then tendering resignation, if need be. If I were

president of the Congress Committee I should not only authorize the official concerned to take legal proceedings but after his resignation endeavour to have the official reinstated for zealous discharge of his duty. The saving of Congress funds is as much a duty as the retention of the boycott of law-courts. As a matter of fact the Congress official who may be the plaintiff or complainant in his representative capacity commits no personal breach of the boycott resolution. It is the Congress that does it. And the Congress has a perfect right to break its own laws in its own favour. In a well ordered State the maxim, "The King can do no wrong", has a legitimate purpose and place.

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85. THE REALITIES

It is possible that the reader is being disturbed by the bewildering changes he may be noticing at present in the *Young India* writings. I can assure him that they are not changes but they are a distinct advance in the direction we are going or should go. They are natural corollaries to the principles we profess.

If we will remember that non-violence is more important than non-co-operation and that the latter without the former is a sin, what I am at present developing in these pages will be as clear as daylight. The difficulty, however, is that the reader does not know much of what is going on behind the scenes. I am restraining myself partly on purpose and partly because I cannot do otherwise. It is difficult to pass on decisions from moment to moment and from day to day to the fellow-workers. I must simply trust that as they are in my opinion the necessary corollary to the main principle, they will be as plain to the reader as they are to me.

The fact is, action must vary with every varying circumstance. It is not inconsistent, if it springs from the same source.

What must be however apparent to everyone is that our differences are increasing. Each group is making of its programme a matter of principle. Each sincerely believes that its programme will bring us nearer to the common goal. So long as there is a body of people in the country—and it is a large if not a growing body—so long will there be parties prosecuting the Councils programme. Our non-co-operation therefore has taken the form of non-co-operation in practice with one another instead of the Government. Without wishing it we are

weakening one another and to that extent helping the system we are all seeking to destroy. Let us recognize its chief characteristic. It is parasitical and derives nutrition from the fungi of national life.

Our non-co-operation was meant to be a living, active, non-violent force matched against the essential violence of the system. Unfortunately the non-co-operation never became actively non-violent. We satisfied ourselves with physical non-violence of the weak and helpless. Having failed to produce the immediate effect of destroying the system, it has recoiled upon us with double strength and now bids fair to destroy us, if we do not take care betimes. I, for one, am therefore determined not to participate in the domestic wrangle but would even invite all concerned to do likewise. If we cannot actively help, we must not hinder. I am just as keen a believer as ever in the five boycotts. But I clearly see, as I did not at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting, that whilst we maintain them in our own persons, there is no atmosphere for working them. There is too much distrust in the air. Every action is suspected and misinterpreted. And whilst we carry on a war of explanation and counter-explanation, the enemy at the door is rejoicing and consolidating his forces. We must avoid this almost at any cost.

I have therefore suggested that we should find out the lowest common measure among all the political parties and invite them all to co-operate on the Congress platform for achieving that common measure. This is the work of internal development without which there will be no effective external political pressure. The politicians who put the external work before the internal, or who think (which is the same thing) that the internal is too slow for them, should have the greatest freedom to develop their strength, but in my opinion, this should be outside the Congress platform. The Congress must progressively represent the masses. They are as yet untouched by politics. They have no political consciousness of the type our politicians desire. Their politics are confined to bread and salt—I dare not say butter, for millions do not know the taste of ghee or even oil. Their politics are confined to communal adjustments. It is right however to say that we the politicians do represent the masses in opposition to the Government. But if we begin to use them before they are ready, we shall cease to represent them. We must first come in living touch with them by working for them and in their midst. We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants. With the pariahs we must be pariahs and see how we feel to clean

the closets of the upper classes and have the remains of their table thrown at us. We must see how we like being in the boxes, miscalled houses, of the labourers of Bombay. We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.

"We cannot all do this, and if we are to do this, good-bye to swaraj for a thousand years and more," some will say. I shall sympathize with the objection. But I do claim that some of us at least will have to go through the agony and out of it only will a nation full, vigorous and free be born. I suggest to all that they should give their mental co-operation and that they should mentally identify themselves with the masses, and as a visible and tangible token thereof, they should earnestly spin for at least thirty minutes per day in their name and for their sake. It will be a mighty prayer from the intelligentsia among the Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians and others of India, rising up to heaven for their, that is, India's deliverance.

I see no way of removing the Hindu-Muslim tension, which is becoming daily tenser, save by all the parties coming together on the Congress platform and devising the best method of solving a problem which seems to defy solution and to dash to pieces all the fond hope we had of securing a national freedom that is broad-based upon mutual trust and mutual help. If for no other reason, let us, at least for the sake of achieving unity, give up the internecine political strife.

Here is my proposal to that end:

1. The Congress should suspend all the boycotts except that of foreign cloth till the session of 1925.

2. The Congress should, subject to (1), remove the boycott of Empire goods.

3. The Congress should confine its activity solely to the propaganda of hand-spinning and hand-spun khaddar, the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity, and in addition, its Hindu members' activity to the removal of untouchability.

4. The Congress should carry on the existing national educational institutions; and if possible, open more and keep them independent of Government control or influence.

5. The four-anna franchise should be abolished and in its place the qualification for membership should be spinning by

every member for half an hour per day and delivery to the Congress from month to month of at least 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn, cotton being supplied where the member is too poor to afford it.

It is necessary to say a word about the proposed radical change in the Congress constitution. I may be pardoned for saying that I am the principal author of the Congress constitution. It was intended to be the most democratic in the world, and if successfully worked, to bring swaraj without more. But it was not so worked. We had not sufficient honest and able workers. It must be confessed that it has broken down in the sense in which it was intended. We never had even one crore of members on the roll. At the present moment probably our nominal roll does not exceed two lakhs for all India. And the vast majority of these too are as a rule not interested in our proceedings save for paying four annas and voting. But what we need is an effective, swift-moving, cohesive, responsive organization containing intelligent, industrious national workers. Even if we are a few only, we should give a better account of ourselves than a cumbrous and slow body with no mind of its own. The only boycott proposed to be retained is that of foreign cloth and if we are to make it successful, we can only do so by making the Congress for a time predominantly a spinners' association. It will be a great triumph and a great demonstration, if we succeed in one constructive item of a striking magnitude. I hold that the only possible thing of the kind is hand-spinning and hand-spun khaddar. If we are to make of khaddar a national success, the spinning-wheel is the only thing. If we are permanently to interest the masses in the national welfare of the country, the spinning-wheel is the only medium. If we are to banish pauperism from the land, the spinning-wheel again is the only remedy.

The implications of my proposals are that

(a) the Swarajists should be free to organize themselves without any opposition from the Congress or No-changers;

(b) the members of other political bodies should be invited and induced to join the Congress;

(c) the No-changers should be precluded from carrying on any propaganda either direct or indirect against Council-entry;

(d) those who do not personally believe in any of the four boycotts will be free, without any disgrace whatsoever, to act as if they did not exist. Thus non-co-operating lawyers will be free to resume practice if they chose and title-holders, school-

masters, etc., will be free to join the Congress and be eligible to the executive.

The scheme enables all the political parties to work unitedly for the internal development. The Congress presents a suitable opportunity for a conference of all political parties and outside the Congress to frame a swaraj scheme acceptable to all and for presentation to the Government. Personally I am of opinion that time has not arrived for any such presentation. I believe that it would increase our internal strength beyond expectation if we could all simply unite to make the foregoing constructive programme a success. But a large number of those who have hitherto led the country think otherwise. In any event a swaraj scheme for the sake of ourselves is a necessity. As the reader will remember, I am in this matter a complete convert to Babu Bhagwandas's[1] view. I would therefore join any such conference, if my presence was required, and assist at framing the scheme. The reason for insisting on this matter being treated as an activity outside the Congress is to keep the Congress purely for internal development for full one year. When we have achieved a measure of success commensurate with the task before us, the Congress may function for outside political activity.

What if the proposal is not accepted and it is found difficult to bring together all parties on the Congress platform and to heal the breach between the Swarajists and ourselves? My answer is simple. If the whole fight is for "capturing" the Congress, I must refuse to enter upon it. I would advise all who think with me to do likewise. I would advise handing the Congress over to the Swarajists on their terms and leave the Swarajists to work the Councils programme unhampered by any counter-propaganda. I would engage the No-changers purely on the constructive programme and advise them to seek such help from the other parties as they can give.

Those who depend for national regeneration solely on the constructive programme may be expected to lead in the matter of self-sacrifice. Not one of the things we hold dear can be achieved by trying to retain power in the Congress in opposition to the Swarajists. We must hold it on their sufferance. Both parties will be guilty of corrupting the simple people who worship the name "Congress", if they are made at our bidding to engage in a suicidal tug-of-war. Power that comes from service faithfully

[1] Scholar and public worker; took a leading part in establishing Kashi Vidyapith, a national university at Banaras

rendered ennobles. Power that is sought in the name of service and can only be obtained by a majority of votes is a delusion and a snare to be avoided, especially at the present moment.

Whether I have convinced the reader of the soundness of my proposal or not my mind is made up. It hurts me to think that those with whom I have hitherto worked hand in glove should be working in a seemingly opposite direction.

What I have sketched above is not conditions of surrender. Mine is an unconditional surrender. I would guide the Congress next year only if all parties wish me to. I am trying to see daylight out of this impenetrable darkness. I seem to see it dimly. But I may be still wrong. All I know is that there is no fight left in me. This is much for a born fighter to say. I have fought my dearest ones. But I fight out of love. I should fight the Swarajists too out of love. But I must, I see, first prove my love. I thought I had proved it. I see I was wrong. I am therefore retracing my steps. I ask everyone to help me to do so and to reunite the two wings on a common platform. The Congress must, for sometime to come at least, remain largely a homogeneous body.

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86. *MY JAIL EXPERIENCES–XI* [*Coutinued*]

What I Read–2

My Urdu studies proved as absorbing as the reading of *Mahabharata.* They grew on me as I proceeded. I approached this study with a light heart foolishly imagining that in two or three months I should be quite an adept in Urdu. But to my sorrow I discovered that it had been made into a language distinct from Hindi and that the tendency was growing in that direction. But that discovery only made me more determined than ever to be able to read and understand Urdu literature. I therefore gave nearly three hours per day to Urdu reading. The Urdu writers have purposely gone out of their way to use Arabic or Persian words even to the rejection of words current among Hindus and Mussalmans. They have rejected even the common grammar and imported Arabic or Persian grammar. The result is that the poor nationalist if he will keep in touch with the Mussalman thought, must study Urdu as a separate, new language. The Hindi writers I know have done no better or no less. Only I

thought that the evil had not gone very deep and the separatist tendency was a mere passing phase. Now I see that if we are to have a common national language being a mixture of Hindi and Urdu, special and prolonged effort will have to be made to effect a juncture between the two streams which seem at present to be diverging more and more one from the other. In spite however of the difficulty I retain the opinion that it is necessary for a Hindu to complete his education to know literary Urdu as it is for a Mussalman to know literary Hindi. It is easy enough if begun early. This study may have no pecuniary value, it may not open up the treasures of Western knowledge. But its national value is beyond compare. I am the richer for my close study of Urdu. I wish I could even now complete it.

I know the Mussalman mind much better than I did two years ago. I was interested in the religious side of Urdu literature and therefore plunged, as soon as I was able, into Urdu religious books. Fates have always favoured me. Maulana Hasrat Mohani[1] had sent to Mr. Mansar Ali *Leaves from the Lives of the Companions of the Prophet.* As he was teaching me Urdu he passed the volumes on to me. And I went through them with the greatest diligence. The volumes, though they contain repetitions and would gain in lucidity for compression, were to me deeply interesting for the insight they gave me into the doings of the Prophet's many companions. How their lives were transformed as if by magic, what devotion they showed to the Prophet, how utterly unmindful they became of worldly wealth, how they used power itself for showing the utter simplicity of their lives, how they were untouched by the lust for gold, how reckless they were of their own lives in a cause they held sacred, is all told with a wealth of detail that carries conviction with it. When one notes their lives and then the lives of the present-day representatives of Islam in India, one is inclined to shed a tear of bitter grief.

I passed from the companions to the Prophet himself. The two bulky volumes written by Maulana Shibli are a creditable performance. But I have the same complaints about them that I have lodged about the diffuseness of the volumes devoted to the companions. But the diffuseness did not interfere with my interest to know how a Mussalman had treated the incidents of the life of one who has been almost uniformly maligned and abused in the West. When I closed the second volume, I was sorry there

[1] 1875-1951; nationalist Muslim leader, took active part in the Khilafat movement

was not more for me to read of that great life. There are incidents in it which I do not understand, there are some I cannot explain. But I did not approach the study as a critic or a scoffer. I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind. And I found enough in the volumes to account for it. I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. As I do not regard any human being absolutely perfect, be he a prophet or an avatar, it is unnecessary for me to be able to explain to the censor's satisfaction every detail of the Prophet's life. It is enough for me to know that he was a man among millions who tried to walk in the fear of God, died a poor man, wanted no grand mausoleum for his mortal remains and who did not forget even on his death-bed the least of his creditors. The teaching of the Prophet is no more responsible for the degrading intolerance or questionable proselytizing methods that one sees around himself than Hinduism is responsible for the degradation and intolerance of present-day Hindus.

From the Prophet I passed to the two volumes devoted to the life of Umar the unconquerable. As I pictured him before my mental eye walking to Jerusalem upbraiding some of his followers for aping the pomp of their neighbours, refusing to pray in a Christian church lest succeeding generations might claim to convert it into a mosque, granting the most liberal terms to the conquered Christians, and as I picture him declaring that the word of a follower of Islam, though pledged by one not authorized thereto, was as good as the written decree of the great Caliph himself, he commands my humble respect. His was an iron will. He weighed out the same justice to his daughter that he would weigh to an utter stranger. I fancy I understand the breaking of idols and wanton desecration of temples, the thoughtless intolerance of Hindu music now going on in our midst. These acts seem to me to be due to an utter misreading of the events in the life of the greatest of the Caliphs. I fear that the acts of this great and just man are being presented to the Mussalman masses in a most distorted fashion. I know that if he rose from his grave, he would disown the many acts of the so-called followers of

Islam which are a crude caricature of those of the great Umar himself.

From this entrancing study, I went to the philosophical volumes called *Al Kalam*. These are difficult to understand. The language is highly technical. Mr. Abdul Gani however made my study fairly easy. I was only sorry my illness interrupted my study when I had only half finished the volumes.

Of the English books Gibbon['s][1] takes easily the first place. It was recommended to me years ago by so many English friends. I was determined to read Gibbon in the jail this time. I was glad of it. For me even history has a spiritual significance. As the author proceeds to trace the events in the life of the citizens of a single city who built up a world-empire, one traces the history of the soul. For Gibbon does not deal with trifles, he deals with vast masses of facts and arrays them before you in his own inimitable way. He deals with three civilizations, Pagan, Christian and Islamic, in sufficient detail to enable you to frame your own conclusions. His own compel attention. But he is as a historian jealous of his calling, faithful enough to give you all his data so as to enable you to judge for yourself.

Motley is another type. Gibbon traces the decay of a mighty empire. Motley extracts from a little republic the life of his hero. Gibbon's heroes are subservient to the story of a mighty empire. Motley's story of a State is subservient to that of one single life. The republic merges in William the Silent.

Add to these two Lord Rosebery's *Life of Pitt*. And you are perhaps then prepared to draw with me the conclusion that the dividing line between fact and fiction is very thin indeed and that even facts have at least two sides or as lawyers say facts are after all opinions. However I have no desire to engage the reader's attention upon my speculations on the value of history considered as an aid to the evolution of our race. I believe in the saying that a nation is happy that has no history. It is my pet theory that our Hindu ancestors solved the question for us by ignoring history as it is understood today and by building on slight events their philosophical structure. Such is the *Mahabharata*. And I look upon Gibbon and Motley as inferior editions of the *Mahabharata*. The immortal but unknown author of the *Mahabharata* weaves into his story sufficient of the supernatural to warn you against taking him literally. Gibbon and Motley are unnecessarily at pains to tell you they are giving you facts and nothing

[1] *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

but facts. Lord Rosebery comes to the rescue and tells you that even the last words said to have been uttered by Pitt are disputed by his butler. The substance of all these stories is: Names and forms matter little, they come and go. That which is permanent and therefore necessary eludes the historian of events. Truth transcends history.

Young India, 11-9-1924

87. LETTER TO A FRIEND

SABARMATI,
September 11, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

Mahadev has handed me both your letters for which I thank you. I am under no delusion. The Liberals may or may not join. The Swarajists may or may not join. What I feel is that we are non-co-operating among ourselves. This we must avoid. The rest will take care of itself. So much for the first letter.

As for the second. I have made it clear that the surrender, if it has to be made, must be your own act. You know the situation best. I can only suggest principles that flow from non-violence. Dastane and Devdhar did say many things in Juhu. They have indeed affected me but not in the way you fear. From all their talks I gathered that all the principal members did not believe fully in non-violence or the khaddar work. Take for instance Mr. Bapat. He was the leader of the Mulshi Peta Campaign[1]. I have read his pamphlets on satyagraha. He is no believer in non-violence. Take Mr. Nimbkar. He certainly does not believe in non-violence. I have listened to his speeches and read his writings, too. There have been repeated complaints against him. But these are matters that call for reform within, not surrender. The idea of surrender was evolved long after the A.I.C.C. meeting. It came to me when I saw some poisonous writings. If we were all angels, I would still have us to surrender. To assert our principle is to surrender office, not principle. The latter has to be lived. Though it has a political consequence, the conception of satyagraha is purely spiritual. Humanity is its essence. It is never polemical. It grows on your opponent unperceived, if your conduct is correct. If you surrender, you will do so so as

[1] *Vide* Vol. XX, pp. 66-7.

to do more and better work. The way is so totally different from the ordinary. I do not make my language purposely ambiguous. What I think is original, that is, the method. I have not the language to give life to it, hence the ambiguity. But this much is easily understood. Do not hold on to office if it means the breeding of hatred. Do retain if it comes to you unsought, if it comes to you because public opinion is overwhelmingly in your favour. I have no manner of doubt that the people of all the provinces will be with those who are out and against the present Government and who are prepared to sacrifice themselves to the uttermost for the sake of their service. It matters little whether the servants are in the Congress or outside.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

88. LETTER TO INDRA VIDYAVACHASPATI

SABARMATI,
Bhadarva Sud 13 [*September 11, 1924*][1]

CHI. INDRA,

I have your letter. I wish to have full details about Bhopal. If I get a list of the atrocities, I shall immediately do whatever is possible.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

Received Rai Sahib's letter. I am awaiting Maulana Sahib's letter or telegram.

PROF. INDRA
"ARJUNA" OFFICE
DELHI

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 4861. Courtesy: Chandragupta Vidyalankar

[1] From the postmark

89. TELEGRAM TO KRISHNADAS

[*September 12, 1924*][1]

GOING DELHI TOMORROW MORNING. COME DELHI DIRECTLY AFTER FINISHING THERE.

BAPU

From a photostat : S.N. 10164

90. TELEGRAM TO BALMUKUND VAJPEY[2]

[*September 12, 1924*][3]

WIRE FULL PARTICULARS HERE AND DELHI. PROCEEDING DELHI TOMORROW MORNING.

GANDHI

From a microfilm : S.N. 10492

91. TELEGRAM TO ABDUL BARI

[*September 12, 1924*][4]

MAULANA BARI SAHIB
FIRANGI MAHAL

WHAT IS HINDU MUSLIM TROUBLE IN YOUR DEAR LUCKNOW. I KNOW YOU WILL DO YOUR UTMOST AVOID QUARREL.

GANDHI

From a microfilm : S.N. 10492

[1] & [3] Gandhiji left Ahmedabad for Delhi on September 13.

[2] In reply to the addressee's telegram of September 10 from Lucknow as president of the U.P. Congress, which read: "Great Hindu-Muslim tension. Situation most critical. Muslim leaders indifferent. Help urgent."

[4] The similarity in contents between this telegram and that of Balmukund Vajpey (*vide* footnote [2]) suggests that this was sent on the same day.

92. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

ON WAY TO DELHI,
September 13, 1924

MY DEAR R.,

I am on my way to Delhi for quarrel. I read your letter to S. I am sad because you are sad. I wish you were by my side. How can you continue when we [are] so hopelessly divided? Read my article[1] in current *Young India* fifty times if necessary and you will find out my meaning perhaps. It is written most for you. Your letter to S. suggested it. We are not giving up boycotts because they are removed from the national programme for a time. Surely, if we have courage of our convictions, we can revive them any moment. Why should suspension mean abandonment if we have trust in ourselves?

Yours,
M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

93. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Bhadarva Sud 15, 1880 [*September 13, 1924*]

BHAISHRI FULCHAND[2],

I have your letter. I will certainly carry out from next month the suggestion about giving names. Yarn has been received from Shyambabu, Rajagopalachari and other No-changers. No yarn has been received from any of the leading Swarajists. I shall see about the land of Shivalalbhai. No one gave me any names from Kathiawar. I have made corrections this time. Bhai Kevalram[3] has not yet made up his mind. Think well before

[1] *Vide* "The Realities", 11-9-1924.

[2] Fulchand Kasturchand Shah, a political and constructive worker of Saurashtra

[3] Kevalram Joshi, son of Dewan of Wadhwan

you do anything about the *Antyaja* Ashram. I write this letter on my way to Delhi.

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI FULCHAND
KELAVANI MANDAL KARYALAYA
WADHWAN CITY

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2822. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

94. LETTER TO RADHA GANDHI

Bhadarva Sud 15 [September 13, 1924][1]

CHI. RADHA,

I write this on my way to Delhi. I shall perhaps be there for about fifteen days. Manibehn[2] has pain in the stomach. Her address is: C/o Vallabhbhai Patel, Barrister. My address in Delhi is: C/o Maulana Mahomed Ali, *Comrade* Office, Delhi.

Devdas has stayed on at Ahmedabad. Ramdas[3] is going to Bhavnagar. Kristodas, Pyarelal and Mahadev are with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. RADHA
C/O VORA SHIVLAL KARSANJI
NEAR LAL DARWAJA
RAJKOT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6034. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

95. LETTER TO SANMUKHRAI

September 13, 1924

BHAI SANMUKHRAI,

In order to observe *brahmacharya* the following things are absolutely necessary: (1) Solitude; (2) moderation in eating; (3) good books; (4) regular meditation; (5) plenty of physical and mental labour; (6) abstaining from spicy and intoxicating food

[1] From the postmark
[2] Manibehn Patel, daughter of Vallabhbhai Patel
[3] Gandhiji's third son

or drinks; (7) abstaining from shows and other things having a sex appeal; (8) giving up the desire for sexual intercourse; (9) avoiding being alone with a woman; (10) repeating *Ramanama* or some other *mantra* [formula].

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

96. LETTER TO SARAT KUMAR GHOSH[1]

[After *September 13, 1924*]

I was delighted to receive your wire. I am anxiously praying for light. I have written two letters to Motilalji. There is no question of compromise on principle. Your proposal does commend itself to me.

The Hindu, 16-9-1924

97. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

[*September 14, 1924*]

An important article by Mr. Gandhi on the Hindu-Muslim tension in the last issue of *Navajivan* is translated below for the benefit of the readers of *Young India*.

I had occasion whilst addressing a public meeting at Surat[2] to refer to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity in detail, as some friends there wanted to know my views about *sangathan*. After the meeting I had a letter from a Mussalman friend offering suggestions for the solution of the question. I now see that even

[1] In reply to his telegram of September 13 as correspondent of *Servant*, which read: ". . . we understand that you are either going to accept the Swarajist programme including their taking up offices and you remaining satisfied with constructive programme, or you are abandoning the Congress altogether. We do not know your plan. . . . So long as you are in the Congress, No-changers have to try to capture office. Hence there is constant friction. When you are out, No-changers are free to come out with a clean conscience. . . . Under the circumstances, we, your followers, think it would be best for you and your followers to give up the Congress and form an independent association. . . . "

[2] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Surat", 5-9-1924.

Gujarat is not quite free from the dangers of communal disturbances. The Visnagar affair can hardly be said to be yet settled. There is some trouble in Mandal. There was fear of a little disturbance in Ahmedabad. Some trouble is apprehended in Umreth. Other parts (e.g., Bhagalpur in Bihar) are also in the same plight.

The question of Hindu-Muslim unity is getting more and more serious every day. One thing should be made clear at the outset. In the case of many of these disturbances, we hear of Government agents being at the back of them. The allegation, if true, would be painful to me, not surprising. It should not be surprising if the Government fomented the troubles, it being their policy to divide us. It would be painful because of the necessary implication that neither of the communities realizes wherein lies its interest. Only those can be set by the ears by a third party, who are in the habit of quarrelling. Government has never been heard of having fomented a quarrel, say, between the Brahmins and Banias, nor amongst the Sunni Mussalmans. The suspicion or fear of their having set the Hindus and Mussalmans by the ears is always entertained, because both have quarrelled so often. It is this habit of quarrelling that needs to be abandoned if we want to have swaraj and retain it.

Quarrels must break out so long as the Hindus continue to be seized with fear. Bullies are always to be found where there are cowards. The Hindus must understand that no one can afford them protection, if they go on hugging fear. Fear of man argues want of faith in God. Only he trusts to his physical strength who has no faith or very little faith in God's omnipresence. The Hindu must cultivate either of these two—faith in God or faith in one's physical might. If he does neither, it will spell the ruin of the community.

The first, viz., reliance on God and shaking off the fear of man is the way of non-violence and the best way. The second, viz., reliance on one's physical might is the way of violence. Both have a place in the world. It is open to us to choose either. One man cannot try both at the same time. If all the Hindus and Mussalmans both elect the way of violence, we had better cease to talk of winning swaraj in the immediate future. Armed peace means not a little fighting that will end with the breaking of a few heads or of a dozen temples. It must mean prolonged fighting and rivers of blood. I am against *sangathan*, and I am not. If *sangathan* means opening *akhadas* and organizing the Hindu hooligans through them, I would regard it as a pitiable

condition. You cannot defend yourself and your religion with the help of hooligans. It is substituting one peril for another, and even adding another. I would have nothing to say against *akhadas*, if they were used by the Brahmins, Banias and others for the development of their physique. *Akhadas* as *akhadas* are unexceptionable. But I have no doubt that they are no good for giving a training to fight the Mussalmans. It will take years to acquire the physical strength to fight.

The *akhada* is therefore not the way. We will have to go in for *tapasya*, for self-purification, if we want to win the hearts of Mussalmans. We shall have to cast off all the evil in us. If they attack us, we shall have to learn not to return blow for blow, but bravely to face death—not to die a craven death leaving wife and children behind, but to receive their blows and meet death cheerfully.

I would tender the same advice to the Mussalmans. But it is unnecessary, as the average Mussalman has been assumed to be a bully. The general impression is that the Mussalmans can fight and fight well. I do not, therefore, need to tell them how they should defend themselves from the attacks of the Hindus; on the contrary I have to appeal to them to forbear. I have to appeal to them to get the *goonda* element under control and to behave peaceably. The Mussalmans may regard the Hindus as a menace in other matters. They do regard them as an economic menace. They do dread the Hindus' interference with their religious rites on the *Bakr-i-Id* day. But they are in no fear of being beaten by the Hindus. I will therefore tell them only this: "You cannot protect Islam with the lathi or the sword. The age of the lathi is gone. A religion will be tested by the purity of its adherents. If you leave it to the *goondas* to defend your faith[1], you will do serious harm to Islam. Islam will, in that case, no longer remain the faith of the fakirs and worshippers of Allah."

I have up to now confined myself to giving general advice. Maulana Hasrat Mohani told me that the Mussalmans ought to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, and Hindus should cease to regard the Mussalmans as untouchables, as he said they are regarded in North India. I told him: "I will not bargain with you in this matter. If the Mussalmans think it their duty to protect the cow for the sake of Hindus, they may do so, irrespective of how the Hindus behave towards them.

[1] The source has "youth".

I think it is sin for a Hindu to look upon a Mussalman as an untouchable, and the Hindu ought not to do so, irrespective of a Mussalman killing or sparing the cow. The Mussalman ought to be no more untouchable to a Hindu than a Hindu of any of the four castes is to one of the other. I regard these things as axiomatic. If Hinduism teaches hatred of Islam or of non-Hindus, it is doomed to destruction. Each community should then put its house in order without bargaining with the other. To nurse enmity against the Mussalman, for the sake of saving the cow, is a sure way to kill the cow, and doubly sinful. Hinduism will not be destroyed by a non-Hindu killing a cow. The Hindu's religion consists in saving the cow, but it can never be his religion to save the cow by a resort to force towards a non-Hindu. The Hindus want swaraj in India and not a Hindu Raj. Even if there was a Hindu Raj, and toleration one of its features, there would be place in it for Mussalmans as well as Christians; it would redound to the credit of Hinduism, if stopping of cow-slaughter was brought about not by force, but as deliberate voluntary act of self-denial on the part of Mussalmans and others. I would therefore deem it unpatriotic even to nurse a dream of a Hindu Raj."

Then there is the trouble about music. It is fast growing every day. A letter I had in Surat says that, as it is not obligatory on a Hindu to play music, he should stop it before mosques to spare the feelings of the Mussalmans. I wish the question was as simple as the correspondent thinks. But it is the opposite of simple. Not a single Hindu religious ceremony can be performed without the accompaniment of music. Some ceremonies require the accompaniment of continuous music. No doubt, even here due regard ought to be had for the feelings of the Mussalmans. The music may in such cases be less noisy. But all this can be and ought to be done on the basis of "give and take". Having talked with a number of Mussalmans in the matter, I know that Islam does not make it obligatory for a Mussalman to prevent a non-Mussalman from playing music near mosques. Nor is such a thing on the part of a non-Mussalman calculated to injure Islam. Music should never, therefore, be a bone of contention.

In many places, however, the Mussalmans have forcibly sought to stop Hindus from playing music. This is clearly intolerable. What is readily yielded to courtesy is never yielded to force. Submission to a courteous request is religion, submission to force is irreligion. If the Hindus stop music for fear of a

beating from the Mussalmans, they cease to be Hindus. The general rule in this respect may be said to be this, that where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before mosques, they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed, both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration.

Where a court of law has prohibited music, the Hindus should not take the law in their own hands. And the Mussalmans should not insist on stopping music by force.

Where the Mussalmans refuse to yield, or where the Hindus apprehend violence, and where there is no prohibition by a court of law, the Hindus must take out their processions with music accompanying, and put up with all the beating inflicted on them. All those who join processions or who form the musical band must thus sacrifice themselves. They will thereby defend their Faith and their self-respect.

Where the Hindus are unequal to this soul-force, it is open to them to resort to force in self-defence. Where death without resistance or death after resistance is the only way, neither party should think of resorting to law-courts or help from Government. Even if one of the parties resorts to such aid, the other should refrain. If resort to law-courts cannot be avoided, there ought to be at least no resort to false evidence.

It is the rule of honourable combat that, after having heartily given and taken blows, both the parties quiet down, and seek no reinforcement from outside. There should be no bitterness or feeling of revenge behind.

A quarrel should in no case be carried from one street to another. The fair sex, the aged and the infirm, children and all non-combatants ought to be free from molestation. Fighting would be regarded as sportsmanlike if these rules are observed.

I hope that the Hindus and Mussalmans in Gujarat will keep their heads cool and keep the peace. I hope also that the fear of a possible trouble in Umreth is unjustified. Let both the communities there hold mutual consultations and settle their differences amicably.

Running away for fear of death, leaving one's dear ones, temples or music to take care of themselves, is irreligion, it is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Non-violence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it.

It will take some time before the average Hindu ceases to be a coward and the average Mussalman ceases to be a bully. In the

meantime, the thinking section of both the communities should try their best, on all occasions of trouble, to refer matters to arbitration. Their position is delicate, but they should expend all their energy in keeping the peace.

Young India, 18-9-1924

98. *CAUSES OF FAILURE*

Swaraj cannot be secured within the time-limit set by us; besides this, the situation which we wished to end seems to be striking deeper roots. Not only have we not secured swaraj, we have developed a fear of swaraj. Hindus say they do not want it, so also Muslims and Non-Brahmins say they do not want it—who then wants swaraj? What sort of people are they if they are afraid of freedom itself? Thus we have been reduced to a peculiar plight.

Let us examine the causes. If you take a potent medicine without circumspection, it leads to a relapse; this is the very thing that has happened with non-co-operation, which is like a potent medicine and cannot be taken casually. If there is any error in employing it, serious harm may result. A son co-operates as a rule with his father, so does a wife with her husband, or a people with their king. There is a bond of love between the two; but there are occasions when there is and ought to be non-co-operation between the two. If that non-co-operation is virulent, it is detestable and sinful. Between father and son there can be no enmity. If it does arise, it is more dreadful than ordinary enmity. The Germans and the English are cousins. When they fought, one had to go down to dust. By refraining from such blood-thirsty non-co-operation and calling our non-co-operation peaceful, we have completely transformed its character. Our peaceful non-co-operation must needs be constructive, not destructive. Poison should not emerge from the throes of love. We wished to end our enmity with Englishmen and make friends but it could not be. The adjective "peaceful" was under-emphasized in our non-co-operation. Our non-co-operation turned out to be that of the weak. In spite of this, we have been able to achieve good results, our spirits have risen, the people have become aware of their power, we have got a glimpse of an irresistible weapon; but we have not learnt how to make full use of it.

Therefore, we retreated. Our love, which was only skin-deep, vanished. Only non-co-operation was left behind and we did not

succeed against the Government; that is why we started to non-co-operate among ourselves. Once we take a weapon out of its sheath, it does not turn back but leads to our own destruction. Hindus and Muslims started non-co-operation with each other, so also did Swarajists and No-changers. In these two instances of non-co-operation, there is war instead of peace, hate instead of love. There is no mutual confidence, they don't want even to see each other's face. Those who look upon pure love as a potent weapon, what are they to do in such circumstances? What is the duty, in these circumstances, of a man like me who claims to be an advocate of non-violence? I am in the forefront of the struggle against the Swarajists. I do not in the least approve of their programme of entering the Councils. Therefore I fought them hard in the Congress, acknowledged defeat and announced my intention to fight again. I suppose that my good faith will be recognized and both the groups will engage themselves in their respective programmes, thereby helping each other. But my expectations proved wrong. There is disquiet in the minds of both. Preparations are afoot to capture the Congress at Belgaum by majority strength. This is no sign of love. The principle of majority does not work when differences on fundamentals are involved. If both the parties are suspicious, bitterness is intensified. If the voters cast their votes not intelligently but out of blind faith, then such voting does not serve an educative purpose, but only leads to their degradation. If the voters are trustful and cannot see the intricacies of a problem, the principle of majority may even lead to their destruction.

Knowing all this, how can I seek a majority decision in the Congress? The members who will come there are bound to cast their votes not on the merits of an issue but with an eye on the speakers.

In these circumstances I should set forth an object-lesson in love by sticking to my creed of non-violence. I must not desire to retain control of the Congress in my hands. I should bow out of the Congress if I cannot win over the Swarajists through humble arguments. The success of a non-violent person lies in his defeat. An advocate of non-violence never fights for power; he even propagates his creed not on the strength of a majority but through spiritual power. If his non-violence is true, he believes that ultimate victory would be his even when he is alone, that is to say, the creed would win in the end if he sticks to it in the face of death. The creed will have to adopt a human form in order to propagate itself among human beings. It means that someone must prepare himself to die for the sake of the creed. I have, therefore, made up my mind

not to join a battle of votes with the Swarajists for the sake of the creed; and I tender the same advice to all peaceful non-co-operators. This alone will enable us to bridge the gulf that has yawned between us. I wish to see not only the Swarajists but all parties participating in the work of the Congress. It is only when the bulk of the people co-operate heartily among themselves that non-co-operation with the Government can shine forth.

Is there any programme which may unite all parties? That programme should consist of items essential for the general public. In my opinion, there are three items for such a programme: Khadi, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability by the Hindus.

Swaraj, I think, is unattainable if we fail to achieve any one of these three things. Therefore I suggest:

1. The Congress should suspend four out of the five boycotts for a year; and should continue only the boycott of foreign cloth.

2. Besides the above-mentioned threefold programme, the Congress should carry on the existing national schools and, if possible, open more such schools. It should not engage itself in any other activity.

3. The Congress should neither help nor hinder the Swarajists or other parties in their public activities.

4. Members of any other political bodies should be allowed to get elected to executive committees, etc., of the Congress.

5. The four-anna franchise should be abolished and every member should be made to spin for half an hour a day and to deliver 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn. All of them should wear pure khadi.

None of these suggestions, except the fifth, is likely to be opposed. If we wish to accomplish the boycott of foreign cloth soon, I think the fifth suggestion is essential. The principal causes for shortfall in the spread of khadi are:

1. Idleness;
2. lack of proficiency;
3. apathy for the miseries of the poor.

It cannot be said that even a very busy man cannot spare half an hour for national service. Members of the Congress must get rid of our [national] habit of idling away time. We cannot popularize the spinning-wheel without learning to ply it. We get very few men for this work. Thousands of men and women can surely be proficient in spinning by dint of the fifth suggestion.

If we had the slightest sympathy for the poor, we would not touch foreign cloth and would wear only hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. We would establish a constant bond with the poor

by spinning for half an hour. God ever dwells among the poor. If we seek swaraj as much for the poor as for ourselves, it is the duty of every Congressman to spin. If thousands look upon spinning as a religious duty and perform it, the poor will ply the spinning-wheel to supplement their income. A lot of effort, haphazard and half-hearted, goes waste. Spinning is the only work which does not go waste. Whatever effort is put into it becomes fruitful. Yarn spun in five minutes can also be sold. But cloth woven in five minutes or cotton carded during the same time cannot be marketed. Moreover, if millions of people engage in professions like weaving, etc., their product could not be sold. If millions take to spinning, then alone can the people's demand be met. If thousands of men and women spin with a sense of religious obligation, khadi would become fine and inexpensive. Within six months we can collect large quantities of fine, well-twisted yarn.

It is possible to argue that admitting into the Congress only those who spin would keep out of it a large number of persons. The fact is that even now there are only a few names on our registers. Gujarat perhaps has a larger number than any other province. And here we have less than 20,000 members. There are 50 tahsils in Gujarat. There is not one Congress member in about half of them. I think the conditions in other provinces are worse. Moreover, these names become known only on two occasions. Once while collecting four annas and next while seeking their votes. The committee does not assign any other solid work to them. We wish to enrol servants of the people on the registers of the Congress. Such servants alone can convert the Congress into a people's forum. Even if we enrol four crores without any stipulation, what purpose can it serve? Instead, if we enrol four lakhs who spin, the Congress would become a vigorous organ for serving the people, by pooling together half an hour's labour and a little cotton from these four lakhs. The bringing together of these four lakhs by the Congress every month is not a small thing; but contribution of a little cotton and half an hour's labour at home is a small and simple thing. A little labour and a small contribution by many is likely to endow people with strength to produce massive results. That is why I consider my suggestions valuable. *And whether the Congress approves or not, I do wish that Gujarat should start acting upon them voluntarily.* Any province or any tahsil which acts in this manner will, in a short time, discover the beneficial effects of the activity.

Does it mean that the non-co-operators will halt their non-co-operation? No one should raise this doubt. Those who believe

in non-co-operation will enlarge the area of their non-co-operation; but they will be friendly to those who hold the opposite view. This is not a new thing. I have been elaborating this from the very beginning. Since this has not been understood, I wish to practise the creed of love by advising suspension of non-co-operation and of boycott, and unity with co-operators. Non-co-operating lawyers may not resume their practice, but should meet practising lawyers courteously in the Congress. Suspension of boycott implies that the advocates of boycott lose the right to criticize co-operators. On the issue of Council-entry also, both of them will have the same place and the same rights in the Congress. The four things mentioned above will bind them together. It is true that one who wears foreign or mill-made clothes will have no place in the Congress. Even those who trade in foreign cloth or who own textile mills can join the Congress, but they must recognize the importance of khadi by themselves wearing it, by sympathizing with the poor and by helping in the spread of the spinning-wheel. Boycott of foreign cloth will be a permanent aspect of popular democracy and hence it would be impossible to win swaraj without emphasizing it. A permanent boycott of our own mills is not sought; but we should reduce our attachment to mill-made cloth. Khadi should get the first place. I have, therefore, no doubt that even mill-made cloth should be disallowed for the purposes of Congress membership as long as khadi and the spinning-wheel do not become widespread.

What would happen, however, if the Swarajists do not approve these ideas of mine? I have a clear answer. I would not, even then, seek to dominate the Congress by wrestling with them.

If I cannot satisfy them even to this extent, I do not mind helping them in such a take-over and persuade others to do so. I do not see any means, except an extensive use of khadi, for remedying the utter poverty of India. It should be painful to me as well as to all Indians if khadi is abandoned. If the Swarajists do not approve of this work also, I shall make way courteously and explore ways for the propagation of khadi, which may not hamper the Congress. I am pledged to expend all my energy in straightening out this domestic dispute, because this would also resolve the Hindu-Muslim dispute. But why should Gujarat not see to it that no one opposes khadi or argues against the use and spread of khadi as advocated by me? If Gujarat has faith in khadi, may she spread it and may God help her!

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-9-1924

99. MY NOTES

Instructions to Spinners

The following instructions[1] from the examiner of yarn appointed by the All-India Khadi Board deserve the attention of every spinner.

It means spinners should not try to spin fine without knowing the test for yarn. If fine yarn is weak, it is quite useless. Moreover, when the cotton is not of long staple or if the slivers are not properly processed, the temptation to spin fine should be given up. Yarn up to 30 counts is not considered fine. If yarn is uniformly of 20 to 30 counts, we can save a lot of cotton; and saris, dhotis, etc., which are very heavy, can be made lighter and finer.

Apologies to Kathiawaris

I did not see the names of any Kathiawaris when the figures of spinners were brought to me. I was sorry and criticized the Kathiawaris for not sending any yarn. Next week I received the explanation that there were 13 names from Kathiawar; but they were included in the list of the Provincial Committee. I should have issued the correction, but failed to do so on account of my tour. Fortunately I have received fresh figures and they include 63 names from Kathiawar and three from Kutch. With the arrival of these names, I am hopeful of more and I apologize to Kathiawar and Kutch. The population of Kathiawar is said to be 2.6 million and that of Maha Gujarat, 9.2 million. The share of Kathiawar should be at least a fourth. Instead, only 63 from Kathiawar and a mere three from Kutch have sent any yarn, and this I do not consider enough. Moreover, as many as 22 are from the Ashram at Madhada, 17 from Bhavnagar, 15 from Rajkot and five from Amreli. Even if these figures are further revised not many places are likely to be covered. Kathiawar has the means with which it can achieve the first place in spinning. But the meagre quantity of yarn received suggests that, like other places, Kathiawar too suffers from lack of organization. I do not believe that we cannot find many people who would spin as a matter of religious duty. Even if those who have sent in some yarn exerted more, the figures are likely to rise appreciably.

[1] Not translated here

How to Spread Spinning

If we want to popularize non-professional spinning we needs must have diligence and perseverance. Ratanlal Khandwala, a young man from a well-to-do family of Surat, formed an association on the Tilak anniversary. This was only one month ago. The association undertakes to supply spinning-wheels and their accessories, as also slivers, etc. They also do minor repairing jobs, and weave the yarn for the spinners. Those who spin at least three thousand yards a month can become members. The association has enrolled 27 members during the first month, and these have spun 2,27,500 yards of yarn. Two of the members who also know weaving have taken up this work. If such associations are formed at several places spinning will soon reach every home. The dearth of slivers is felt everywhere. It is not difficult to card a little cotton with a small bow. A non-professional also can spin sufficiently fine if he selects a proper variety of cotton and takes the requisite care. It may be remembered that up to a certain limit, say up to 30 counts, with finer yarn less cotton is required. Less cotton means lower costs and less carding. Thus spinning fine yarn up to 30 counts has a threefold advantage: less cotton, less labour, less time. Just as there is saving on account of cotton, less carding means some saving too.

Income from Weaving

A friend from Kathiawar who has taken up the weaver's profession by choice and out of love for the country had previously sent in figures pertaining to his income. He is a very careful worker. Improving upon the earlier figures he now writes:[1]

A novice has his own handicaps. But I no more doubt that having improved with experience, he can raise his income without additional efforts. Experience unfolds our latent abilities and intelligent working saves time. Time saved is money earned.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-9-1924

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that with superior yarn income rose by half as much again.

100. LETTER TO ANNIE BESANT

C/o "COMRADE" OFFICE,
DELHI,
September 14, 1924

DEAR DR. BESANT,

I am eternally grateful for your letter and your note on our conversation. I wired to you on receipt of your letter that *Young India* was already published. I am therefore now handing the note to the Associated Press. I have not yet heard from the Swarajists. It is therefore not possible to say what the A.I.C.C. is likely to say. I shall however keep you informed of any development that may take place.

My son will go to Adyar as soon as you want him to. Indeed he will regard it as a privilege to teach you spinning.

Yours sincerely,

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

101. LETTER TO ANANDANANDA

Sunday [On or after *September 14, 1924*][1]

BHAISHRI ANANDANANDA,

I have not yet received your reply to the letter I sent you about the criticism made by a gentleman named Shah of the subscriptions of *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Please send it.

Today I am sending you 9 galleys instead of 8. You are printing at full speed, but after the written matter is finished I shall be able to send you very little. It is only after I reach the Ashram that I shall get the time to write. I shall certainly correct the proofs and return them to you, but remember I shall be able to give you very little afterwards.

I have already told Mahomed Ali about the type, etc. He does not want to make any change for the present. I think we should say nothing more on this matter.

[1] From the reference to his instruction about the type, etc., it is presumed that the letter was written in 1924, from Delhi; *vide* "Letter to Mahomed Ali" and "Letter to Anandananda", 8-9-1924.

I am sure all proper care is taken of business correspondence. Let me know if you are short of hands.

It appears the quantum of our business will also increase. Avantikabai says she receives her *Young India* after she reads the articles and its translations in *The* [*Bombay*] *Chronicle* and the *Nava Kal*. How is it?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7755

102. TELEGRAM TO ABDUL BARI

[After *September 14, 1924*][1]

MAULANA ABDUL BARI
FIRANGI MAHAL
LUCKNOW

CONSULTED HAKIMJI ABOUT VISITING LUCKNOW. WE HAVE COME CONCLUSION NOT DESIRABLE FOR ME LEAVE DELHI AT PRESENT. THINK THEREFORE REPRESENTATIVES BOTH SIDES SHOULD COME HERE.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S. N. 10492

103. MY NOTE

[*September 15, 1924*]

MIDNIGHT SPINNER

As soon as I reached Delhi I realized the extent to which Maulana Mahomed Ali was mindful of his pledge and his responsibility. By the 14th, his 2,000 yards of yarn had not been spun. He was short by about 500 yards. Therefore, after finishing other work, he was spinning late till midnight. I also saw that he was spinning off and on during the night. He is determined to complete his 2,000 yards today, the 15th. While I am writing this, only a few yards have yet to be spun. It is immaterial whether he completes his quota today; but his keenness to fulfil his task is worth ap-

[1] From the reference to Gandhiji's stay in Delhi where he arrived on September 14, 1924

preciating. Maulana Saheb has learnt from experience that, if he organizes his work more systematically, he certainly can do his spinning with ease. Systematic organization comes out of insistence on spinning. A man can put in more work if he organizes his work better in respect of the jobs he has undertaken; and very often he finds that he has time on his hands. A systematic man can do double the work and yet be ready for more. An unsystematic man never sees the end of his work. I am sure that regular spinning makes one orderly and saves one's time.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 21-9-1924

104. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[1]

September 15, 1924

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your most touching personal letter. You will stand it all bravely I know. Father is just now in an irritable mood. And I am most anxious that neither you nor I should contribute an iota to the irritation. If it is at all possible you should have a frank chat with him and avoid such action as may offend him. It makes me unhappy to find him unhappy. His irritability is a sure sign of his unhappiness. Hasrat was here today and I find from him that even my proposal about spinning by every Congressman ruffles him. I do so feel like retiring from the Congress and doing the three things quietly. They are enough to occupy more than all the true men and women we can get. But even that ruffles people. I had a long chat with the Poona Swarajists. They will not agree to spin and they will not agree to my leaving the Congress. They do not realize that I shall cease to be useful as soon as I cease to be myself. It is a wretched situation but I do not despair. My faith is in God. I know only the moment's duty. It is given to me to know no more. Why then should I worry?

Shall I try to arrange for some money for you? Why may you not take up remunerative work? After all you must live by the

[1] Regarding this Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: "I had written to Gandhiji and said that I was rather unhappy to be a financial burden on my father and wanted to stand on my own feet. The difficulty was that I was a whole-time worker of the Congress. My father, when he heard of this, was greatly annoyed."

sweat of your brow even though you may be under Father's roof. Will you be correspondent to some newspapers? Or will you take up a professorship?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 40-1

105. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

C/o M. MAHOMED ALI,
"COMRADE" OFFICE,
DELHI,
September 15, 1924

DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

I have been constantly thinking of you ever since the reading of your letter. How is it that you do not see the necessity as clearly as I do of the step I have taken? I agree with you that it is better to leave the Congress if we cannot enforce our programme. The difficulty is to know how. I cannot help feeling that we must not embarrass the Swarajists. They are supplying a felt want. They do represent a large section of people who want petty relief. Shall we obstruct them? Ours is predominantly a spiritual activity. Its strength is developed unperceived and not by merely debating and vote-taking. I am still not clearly expressing myself. I have simply set forth one argument out of many for the course I have taken and advised for adoption by us all. Somehow or other I *feel* the absolute correctness of the step even though I cannot demonstrate it to your satisfaction. I know how difficult it must be for you and others suddenly to accommodate yourselves to these sudden changes. But how shall I help myself! I know I am putting an undue strain upon the loyalty and the faith of co-workers. But is it not better that I should do that rather than that I should suppress the clear voice within? Of what use should I be if I once stifled that monitor? But this merely by the way.[1]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] The source here adds in brackets: "The rest of the letter deals with S.I. Flood Relief Work."

106. SPEECH AT OPENING CEREMONY OF "THE HINDUSTAN TIMES", DELHI

September 15, 1924

In declaring the press open, Mr. Gandhi said that it was not without hesitation that he accepted the invitation of Sardar Mangal Singh to perform the opening ceremony, holding as he did very strongly that under the present conditions of the country he would, if he could, stop all newspapers except *Young India*. But his intense love for the Sikhs tempted him to accept the invitation. The Sikh position today was full of difficulty and all that he would ask them to do was to have unflinching faith in God. He trusted that a paper beginning under such good auspices would prove worthy of the responsible profession and be conducted with truth, tact and fearlessness. It was a religious venture and he hoped that nothing would compromise their great watchword *Sat Sri Akal*[1]. Every word and sentence published in the paper should be weighed. There should not only be no untrue statements, but no *suggestio falsi* or *suppressio veri*. Truth and love of sacrifice was what their religion taught and he hoped that the journal would carry this out in its service of the Sikhs and of India under the able and educated editorship of Mr. K. M. Panikkar and the guidance of men like Sardar Mangal Singh.[2]

The Hindu, 17-9-1924

107. TELEGRAM TO JAMNADAS DWARKADAS[3]

[On or after *September 15, 1924*]

LETTER RECEIVED. CONGRESS AIM REMAINS SWARAJ. CONGRESSMEN WILL TAKE PART CONFERENCE. REGARD SPINNING ESSENTIAL. WRITING.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10172

[1] "True is the Deathless One."

[2] *The Hindustan Times* postponed publication for a week owing to unexpected breakdown of the machinery.

[3] In reply to his letter of September 15, 1924

108. MESSAGE TO "HINDU", LAHORE

[On or after *September 15, 1924*][1]

DEAR LALA KARAMCHAND,

Here is my message:

I am averse to the multiplication of newspapers at the present moment. A large number are simply fomenting trouble and increasing the tension between Hindus and Mussalmans. If your paper being a Hindu paper does not pledge itself to the surrender by the Hindus of every material interest to the Mussalmans, I for one cannot welcome the enterprise.

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

109. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Bhadarva Vad 3 [*September 16, 1924*][2]

BHAISHRI VALLABHBHAI,

My decision will be known to you even before this reaches you. You are a lion, and will not therefore be perturbed. Please go on doing with greater energy all the work we have resolved to do. Let not anyone be nervous. I propose to complete my fast in this very place. I am afraid Manibehn will be very much upset. Please reassure her. I am not writing a separate letter to her.

BAPU

BHAISHRI VALLABHBHAI PATEL
BARRISTER
AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro 2—Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 10

[1] In *Mahadevbhaini Diary* (Vol. VI) this message is placed between a letter dated September 15, addressed to C. Rajagopalachari and one dated September 17 to Motilal Nehru.

[2] From the reference to the 21-day fast which Gandhiji commenced on the 17th night

110. NOTES

[Before *September 17, 1924*]

No Congressmen Involved

The reader will recollect that the president of the Savarna Mahajan Sabha accused Congressmen of practically disorderly conduct. I have now three letters of categorical denial. One letter is from the conveners of the meeting. I extract the following from that letter:

> We have to make it clear that the meeting was not conducted "under the auspices of the adherents of the Congress party". It was a meeting of the Savarna Hindus of Central Travancore convened at the instance of the Vanjipuzha Chief, the most prominent Brahmin landlord of Chengannur, by a respresentative body of conveners consisting of four Brahmins and three Nair gentlemen of the place. None of these were adherents of the Congress party.
>
> The propositions adopted for presentation and the resolutions passed at the meeting were identical. . . .
>
> We are anxious to inform you of the perfectly non-violent spirit that reigns in Travancore generally in regard to Vykom Satyagraha.

The letter contains a complete and detailed refutation of the charges referred to in *Young India*. But as the meeting in question was evidently not called by Congressmen and as the general public cannot be interested in the detailed refutation, for the sake of brevity I have omitted the major portion of the letter.

Not by Deputy

A correspondent says his mother is an expert spinner and spins nearly 20 *tolas* per day. On the passing of the spinning resolution he asked his mother to teach him spinning. The poor mother did not know what to say. She thought her spinning was enough for all her family, especially as she spun twice as much in a day as was required per person in a month. If the quantity was the only thing aimed at by the resolution, her argument would be irresistible; but there are some duties which cannot be done by deputy. We cannot bathe or study or pray by deputy, nor may we spin by deputy when, by individual spinning, each one of us has personally to identify himself with the poor, when the idea is to set

a personal example and when we want to make a knowledge of the art so universal that by the simple system we can make hand-spun cheap enough to compete with the machine-spun cloth. Underlying the good mother's objection to her boy spinning is no doubt the idea that spinning is merely a woman's calling. It is true that as a rule women only spin. There are no doubt some light occupations which women are better fitted for than men. But to argue therefore that they are derogatory to man's dignity or that they may make him effeminate is a gross superstition. Cooking is essentially a woman's calling, but every soldier must not only know cooking but he has to do it himself whilst he is on duty. The most accomplished cooks in the world today are men. Woman is, by habit or nature, queen of the household. She is not designed to organize on a large scale. Being conservative and preservative, she is not inventive. Man, being restless and often destructive, is inventive. Whether this statement be universally true or not, the fact stands that all the greatest inventions have been made by men. Our own spinning has been organized by men spinners. All the necessary improvements in the machine have been made by men spinners. Looked at from every point of view, hand-spinning is as essential for man as for woman in India, so long as it has not become universal enough to be reinstated in our villages and to bring about total boycott of foreign cloth.

(The above two notes were written before the fast.)

Young India, 25-9-1924

111. *MY JAIL EXPERIENCES–XI* [*Continued*]

[Before *September 17, 1924*]

What I Read-3

I must not omit to mention one little but precious book a dear friend sent. It was *Supersensual Life* by Jacob Boehmen. I notice it to enable me to share with the reader some of the striking passages I copied from it. Here they are:

> It is naught indeed but thine own hearing and willing that do hinder them, so that thou dost not see and hear God.
>
> If thou rulest over the creatures externally only and not from the right internal ground of thy inward nature, then thy will and ruling is in a bestial kind or matter.

Thou art like all things and nothing unlike thee.
If thou wilt be like all things, thou must forsake all things.

Let the hands and the head be at labour. Thy heart ought nevertheless to rest in God.

Heaven is the turning in of the will to the love of God.
Hell is the turning in of the will into the wrath of God.

Whilst I am turning over my scrappy notebook, I come across certain other passages collected in the course of my reading from other books.

Here is one for satyagrahis:

They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think.
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

—Lowell

(Copied from *Tom Brown's School Days*)

Another bearing on the same subject is from Claude Field's *Mystics and Saints of Islam.*

Sufi Shah Mullah Shah, when he was advised to flee from the wrath of Shah Jehan, is reported to have said, "I am not an impostor that I should seek safety in flight. I am an utterer of truth. Death and life are to me alike. Let my blood in another life also redden the impaling stake. I am living and eternal. Death recoils from me, for my knowledge has vanquished death. The sphere where all colours are effaced has become my abode." Mansuri Hallaj said, "To cut off the hands of a fettered man is easy, but to sever the link that binds me to the Divinity would be a task indeed."

Here is another from Lowell. It helps those who would give to the Malabar sufferers to do so in the right spirit and to share their very best.

The Holy Supper is kept indeed
In what we share with another's need.
Not that which we give, but what we share.
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbour and Me.

The following will strengthen those who believe in the gospel of non-violence:

> To wish ill, to do ill, to speak ill or to think ill of anyone, we are equally forbidden without exception.
>
> —Tertullian

(Copied from J. Brierley's *Ourselves and the Universe.*)

The last set of books I should like to mention are the histories of the Sikhs by Cunningham, Macauliff and Gokulchand Narang. All those books are good in their own way. It is impossible to appreciate the present Sikh struggle without understanding their previous history and the life of the Gurus. Cunningham's is a sympathetic record of events leading to the Sikh wars. Macauliff's is a life-story of the Gurus giving copious extracts from their compositions. It is a sumptuously printed publication. It loses its value because of its fulsome praise of the English rule and the author's emphasis on Sikhism as a separate religion having nothing in common with Hinduism. Gokulchand Narang's is a monograph supplying information not available in the two works mentioned.

Before concluding this review of my studies in the jail, let me draw the student-readers' attention to the value of doing things regularly and the way of making dry things interesting. I had a mind, for my own instruction and guidance, to prepare a concordance of the *Gita.* It is not a particularly interesting task to note down words and references and index them twice. I thought I should do it during the incarceration. At the same time I grudged giving much time to the task. My time-table was packed. I determined therefore to do what I could in 20 minutes daily. Doing it for such a short time freed the task from becoming a drudgery. On the contrary, I daily looked forward to it. When it came to re-indexing, it became absorbing. The curious may solve the knotty problem for themselves. The first indexing gave me the alphabetical order of the first letters of the words to be indexed. But how to rearrange the words under each letter in their alphabetical order was a problem to solve. I had never written a dictionary. I had therefore to discover my own method. I was glad when I made the discovery. It was so good that it became deeply interesting. It was neat, quick and infallible. The whole work took me nearly eighteen months to finish. I am now by referring to the concordance able to know where and how often a particular word occurs in the *Gita.* It has also a meaning attached to it. If I ever succeed in reducing to writing my

thougts on the *Gita*, I propose to share the concordance and the thoughts with the public.

(Written before the fast)

Young India, 25-9-1924

112. LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI[1]

Wednesday [September 17, 1924][2]

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I know you will feel the greatest grief for my decision. I want you, however, not to discuss the possibility of going back upon it. That was a matter between God and myself. But you may discuss the merits to your heart's content. Pray don't weep. You will make me break down. Rather rejoice that God has given me both the direction and the strength. Every little progress in composing our difference will be more than food.

The Hindu, 23-9-1924

113. SILENCE DAY NOTE

Wednesday [September 17, 1924]

Arriving at my house, I[3] taxed Mahatmaji with breach of faith towards his co-workers like Hakim Sahib, Dr. Ansari, Shaukat, myself and many others and gave free utterance to all the bitterness that I felt. Mahatmaji's fast of silence had not ended. So, he only smiled and wrote on a piece of paper:

You are entitled to say all you have said and much more. As soon as you have composed yourself, I shall talk to you the whole night. Only remember that there are things in which there is no interposition between God and Man.

Just a little before that, one of his companions had given me a note[4] which was written in his own hand and signed in Urdu. . . .

The Hindu, 23-9-1924

[1] & [2] *Vide* the following item.

[3] Mahomed Ali

[4] *Vide* the preceding item.

114. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

DELHI,
September 17, 1924

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

Don't you fret over my decision. It has been taken after deep prayer and clearest possible indication. This fast of 21 days is the least I can do. Oh the agony of it all! Every day has been a day of torture. But I shall soon be at peace. I was longing to see my duty clearly. The light has come like a flash. Can a man do more than give his life?

With dearest love,

Yours,
MOHAN

C. F. ANDREWS, ESQ.
SHANTINIKETAN
Via BOLPUR
E. I. RLY.

From a photostat : G.N. 2613

115. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

DELHI,
September 17, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I have your wire. I am in Delhi for sometime at any rate. I shall therefore be delighted to see you and Mr. Das whenever you come. I have taken what might be the final plunge. My fast of 21 days commences from today. That is how I have learnt to understand religion.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

116. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Bhadarva Vad 4 [September 17, 1924][1]

About business, Mahadev will write to you. You should be happy about my fast rather than feel sorry. When a man performs his duty even by undergoing trouble his friends should be happy about it. You need not run up here. Now everybody will be coming. You may certainly come over during the last week, provided Taramati is quite well.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 76

117. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Bhadarva Vad 4 [September 17, 1924][2]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. A hip-bath must be taken with cold water only; it has nothing to do with the routine bath. But it must be taken three hours after a meal and nothing should be eaten for one hour after it. During the bath the upper part of the body and the legs are to be kept out of water. The lower abdomen immersed in water should be rubbed with a wet cloth. You must have read about my fast. You need not at all be nervous because it is for 21 days. Do not even think of running up to me. I believe 21 days will not be too much for me.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIMATI VASUMATIBEHN
BATALA

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 456. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] As given by the addressee
[2] From the reference to the 21-day fast

118. LETTER TO RUKMINI GANDHI

Wednesday [September 17, 1924][1]

CHI. RUKHI,

I had been waiting for your letter all this while. Whatever you may do take care of your health. You should build up your health nicely while you are there. Do not neglect Sanskrit. I am glad to know that Moti Ba is now quite well. Give her my best respects.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. RUKMINI GANDHI
C/o SHRI KHUSHALBHAI GANDHI
OPPOSITE MIDDLE SCHOOL
NAVU PARU
RAJKOT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6095. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

119. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[Before *September 18, 1924*][2]

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letter and wire. I hope your not accompanying Gurudev is not due to your illness which you must have got over by this time.

So long as you do not feel as I do, you should receive socks, etc., from your sister. My position remains the same. The sister's love offering cannot be allowed to interfere with the clear duty of feeling one with the poorest by using things made by them. The way to arrive at a proper solution is to multiply your case by one million and find out whether one million gifts be they ever so loving will not rob the poor of the land from disposing of their cloth among us. But why should I strive with you? I shall love you none the less for receiving and using cloth sent by your sister. I do

[1] From the postmark

[2] From the reference to "sister's love offering" in this and "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 18-9-1924

not want you to do things the doing of which *you* do not regard as *necessary*.

Nor do I see any difficulty in reconciling myself to your and my engaging in service not pertaining to the neighbour. I have stated the law. I hold it to be sound. When Jesus "forsook" his blood relations, he did not forsake them. Their service was included in the greater service. But conversely Mahabir stopped, as it may appear to us, higher service for the sake of obeying his mother. Both were right. We cannot judge their actions. But we must recognize the law. You cannot *neglect* the nearer duty for the sake of a remote. You dare not run away from Shantiniketan when it needs you even to *save* the whole of India. Each one to his post.

With deepest love,

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2635

120. NOTES

DR. ANNIE BESANT'S DECLARATION

The reader will, I hope, join me in welcoming Dr. Annie Besant's declaration on the situation. It is to me a matter of great importance that she should recognize the necessity of spinning by way of example by every worker in the national cause. Her example must mean much for the spinning movement. That at her age the gifted lady should consent to devote half an hour, in the midst of her incessant activity, to spinning speaks volumes for her devotion to the national cause.

So far as the constitution of the Congress is concerned, there is evidently some confusion. There is no question of suspending it. It will need amending, if my proposal about spinning is accepted. The non-co-operation programme, including civil disobedience, is not part of the constitution. That programme will, if my proposals are accepted, be certainly suspended for one year. My share in the framing of a swaraj scheme would be this. I would attend, if required, any non-official conference of different parties to frame the scheme. I would be bound by the majority vote in the sense that I would not threaten civil disobedience or non-co-operation, merely because the scheme does not satisfy me—not even after the year of grace is over—provided

the majority are satisfied with it. I would actively work for the scheme, if it satisfies my minimum. I may here say a word about the Congress constitution. I observe critics ascribing to me the opinion that the constitution has been an absolute failure. It has certainly broken down as measured by its own standard. But in my opinion it cannot be seriously denied that the Congress still remains the most national and representative of all the organizations of India. It still has the largest number of original members on its books and has the largest number of volunteers and paid workers of any organization. Nor do I wish to be understood to mean that non-co-operation has absolutely failed. On the contrary, it has vitalized the nation as nothing else has. But it has not come up to the expectations formed of it. The response of the people was great, but not great enough for the purpose intended. All this, however, is small comfort to the workers, who have yet much work to do before they can reap the harvest.

Suspension or Repeal

A friend writes: "Is not your proposed suspension of boycotts only repeal in disguise?" Not for me. I have no present intention of securing repeal of the boycotts. If I had, I should not have hesitated to say so. I hope that it may not be found necessary to resume them. But I should have not the slightest hesitation in advising resumption if I found them necessary for national growth, just as I find their suspension necessary for national growth. "Are you not postponing the internecine feud for a year?" says the friend. My answer again is, "No". We would know at the end of the year where we stand. The boycotts certainly cannot be revived, if at the end of the year there is still a likelihood of sharp divisions. They can only become the national programme if the active workers on the political field can be persuaded of their necessity. Till that happens, they must remain a policy or a creed with a minority. We must not shut our eyes to the fact that whatever the Government yields will be yielded to the demand of the small, vocal and active section of the nation. Nothing will be yielded if this section is divided into many warring sub-sections. I should expect one of two things at the end of the year, either the No-changers will be converted to the purely political, i.e., external activity or the pure politicians will, recognizing the futility of mere external activity, devote themselves to the intensive internal development which would necessarily involve acceptance of boycotts. It may be also that the internal development as well as political activity will command

far more general acceptance and, each party helping the other, we shall compel the Government to accede to the minimum joint demands of all the parties.

The central idea underlying my proposal is to unite the nation on a common platform and to hope that each party, honestly acting upon the other, would be voluntarily converted to a common form of action. Even if this grand purpose fails, we may expect at least to part company with the best grace possible and without imputing motives to one another. Suspension is not an unusual state in a movement. It often brings greater strength to a suspended plan, if it has innate vitality. Those, therefore, who believe in the intrinsic merit of the boycotts need not fear their permanent disappearance because of a brief spell of suspension. They, the believers, ought to be the surest guarantee against any such catastrophe.

"HEART-UNITY"

A correspondent writes:

> In your reply to the Bombay Municipal address[1] you have used an expression—heart-unity. I pondered and meditated on it and saw that in the core of the universe is the secret of heart-unity. One has to go down far into the fathomless depths, grasp and run away with the divine touch-stone and touch with it the sundered and discoloured parts of human associations to bring back colour and happiness. It is in the inner being of *Satya* and *Rita*, of Truth and Law of Nature. It is heart-unity that binds planet to planet and holds planets aloft in space, and it is heart-unity that keeps elemental matter bound each to the other. Chemists had discovered water was a compound of hydrogen and oxygen but by bringing the two together they could not get water till an electric current passed through them. That electric current is the heart-unity in Nature. It is heart-unity that transforms things—melts ice into water, and freezes water into ice; evolution and involution, the descent of spirit into matter and the return of matter to spirit are all the work of heart-unity.
>
> Parvati's *tapasya* for heart-unity with Siva is a wonderful piece of Hindu imagery. Parvati is God's *Shakti* or the active principle in the universe, incarnate in human form. I feel it was a direct vision from God to some *sadhak* ancestor of the race. The force of activity in the Almighty was revealed in its most beautiful aspect, in the place of matter, as Parvati engaged in *tapasya*—for what? for nothing less, i.e., denser than heart-unity with the Heart of Hearts—प्राणस्य प्राणं, a lesson for humanity to con and master. You have mastered it and applied it in the political

[1] *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Corporation Address, Bombay", 29-8-1924.

field by heart-unity with the Alis and others, with the result that we are well on our way to get the compound of an Indian Nation made out of several distinct elements of various races and creeds. May the country take the cue from you and be firm in her *tapasya* of activity in the direction of heart-unity.

I print the letter not for the compliment it pays me but for the heart-unity the writer emphasizes and truly sees in my association with the Ali Brothers and others not of the same faith or even of the same mode of thought. "What is it", the Big Brother said to me last week, "that binds us so indissolubly together, though we are so dissimilar in most things. Is it not after all the allegiance to and the fear of the same God?" What he said was so natural and true. Why should we blaspheme God by fighting one another because we see Him through different media —the Koran, the Bible, the *Talmud*, the *Avesta* or the *Gita*? The same sun beats on the Himalayas as on the plains. Should the men of plains quarrel with the men of the snows because of the different feel of the sun? Why should we make of books and formulas so many fetters to enslave us rather than use them as aids to our deliverance and union of hearts?

Vykom Satyagraha

The Vykom Satyagraha has perhaps a meaning deeper than is generally realized. The young men who have organized it are stern in discipline and gentle in their dealings with the orthodox section. But this is the least part of their trials. Some of them are suffering too the persecution of social boycott. We, of the western presidency, have no idea of what this persecution can mean. These young men who are taking part in the movement are not only being denied social amenities but are threatened even with the deprivation of their share in the family property. If they would go to law, probably they would get their due. But a satyagrahi cannot go to law for a personal wrong. He sets out with the idea of suffering persecution. In a reform that the Vykom struggle seeks to achieve, the satyagrahi seeks to convert his opponent by sheer force of character and suffering. The purer he is and the more he suffers, the quicker the progress. He must therefore resign himself to being excommunicated, debarred from the family privileges and deprived of his share in the family property. He must not only bear such hardships cheerfully but he must actively love his persecutors. The latter honestly believe that the reformer is doing something sinful and therefore resort to the only means they know to be effective to wean

him from his supposed error. The satyagrahi on the other hand does not seek to carry out his reform by a system of punishments but by penance, self-purification and suffering. Any resentment of the persecution, therefore, would be an interruption of the course of discipline he had imposed upon himself. It may be a prolonged course, it may even seem to be never ending. A little bullying or even moral suasion or coercion may appear more expeditious. What, however, I am showing here is not the greater efficacy of satyagraha but the implications of the method the satyagrahi has deliberately chosen for himself. Indeed I have often shown in these pages that satyagraha is, as a matter of fact and in the long run, the most expeditious course. But my purpose here is merely to show what the young satyagrahis of Vykom are doing. The public know much of what they are doing in the shape of picketing but they know nothing of the silent suffering some of them are undergoing at the hands of their families and caste men. But I know that it is this silent and loving suffering which will finally break the wall of prejudice. I am anxious therefore that the reformers should realize their responsibility to the full and not swerve by a hair's breadth from their self-imposed discipline.

South India Relief

Hardly had Mr. George Joseph been out of jail when he made time to send a friend the following description[1] of the distress in Travancore:

What another friend wrote immediately after the floods was also quite true. He said that what damage the rebellion could not do in months was done by seemingly heartless Nature in a day. The real relief will commence after the preliminary work of immediate relief is finished. The readers of *Young India* and *Navajivan* are making a most liberal response to my appeal. They may be sure that it is none too liberal for the task before the workers. I invite cotton merchants to send cotton when they cannot send cash. Thousands who cannot possibly cultivate their land for another year have nothing but the spinning-wheel to fall back upon. I am asking workers to send plans of finding employment for these distressed countrymen and countrywomen. The wheel is no fetish for me and I assure the donors that if I find another common form of work for the thousands, I will not hesitate to devote their donations to that purpose.

[1] Not reproduced here. It gave details of the flood havoc suggesting spinning and the provision of cotton therefor, among the relief measures.

Jealous of His Province

The secretary, A.I.K.B., has handed me for explanation and correction the following legitimate protest from Bihar:

> Our attention has been drawn to Mahatma Gandhi's note in the *Young India* of the 4th instant regarding the yarn sent by the members of the various provinces. Regarding Bihar Mahatmaji says, "There is no second best to Sjt. Rajendra Prasad's." As it might mean discouragement to some of our good spinner members, I would request you to kindly re-examine the yarns of the following members and non-members. If they are found even tolerably fair, kindly see that some mention is made of them.

I have omitted 17 names given in the letter. I owe the secretary and the seventeen members an apology. The fact is that I handed the original report which was in Gujarati and which is printed in full in *Navajivan* for a condensed translation to an assistant and published the translation without comparing it with the original which does no injustice to Bihar. This is the translation of the portion of the original referring to Bihar:

"The yarns received are almost all common. Most hanks are unevenly spun. Cotton not good. Yarn not sprayed. Babu Rajendra Prasad has sent 10,148 yards. It is near 8 counts but is even and well-hanked. There is little yarn from this province so good as this."

I am sorry for the injustice done to Bihar by the *Young India* note referred to. I hope that I shall have the good fortune to find the defects mentioned by the examiner removed in the second month's consignment. The examiner draws my attention to the translation of the portion relating to Sind also and says there may be a just protest from Sind. I therefore hasten to give a full translation of the report regarding Sind as follows:

"Except in the case of two or three packets, there seems to be absence of practised spinning. In some packets the hanks vary and the sizes are curious. No yarn seems to have been sprayed. Some have not even taken the trouble of hanking the yarn." Though Sind may resent it, I am inclined to pardon the translator for the following condensation. "A sorry affair. Little trace of practised spinning." Neat Sindhis, beware!

Young India, 18-9-1924

121. THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

As I am reaching Delhi, I read the following letter which I give almost word for word, save for two or three slight grammatical corrections:

The Mussalmans of Nagpur have run amuck. Though a Hindu, I have hitherto studiously refrained from taking any part in the Hindu agitation at Nagpur. I am a believer both in non-violence and Hindu-Muslim uniy. Believe me, there is no sectarian spirit in me. But the doings of the Mussalmans in Nagpur, as in many other places, are putting my faith to very severe test indeed. The pity of it is that not a single responsible Mussalman of Nagpur has publicly condemned these acts. Had it not been for the brave Doctor Moonje and the gallant Udaram followed by the *Koshthis*[1] there is no knowing what atrocities the Mussalmans would have committed. I know there is no bargaining in love. I also agree that in love it is all giving. But I cannot forget that the sacrifice and sufferings undergone for the sake of love are voluntary and not forced. But the Hindu yields not out of his strength, not of his own free will, but out of his weakness and in spite of himself. To my mind the Hindus are only trying to shake off the slavery of the British to become serfs of the Mussalmans. Your pathetic article[2] on "Gulbarga Gone Mad" is an index of the depth of your own feelings in this matter.

But you have yourself several times declared that you would prefer violence to cowardice. You also wrote in the *Young India* some weeks ago, that the average Mussalman was a bully, and that the average Hindu was a coward.[3] Alas ! this is only too true! How else could the Mussalmans of Nagpur, who are in a minority, rise so often in the teeth of the overwhelming number of the Hindus? The fact of the case is that the docile Hindu commands neither respect nor fear. Whether or not Darwin was right is not my part to determine. But one thing is clear. The world has no place for the weak. They must become strong or cease to be. If the Hindus want to live, they must organize, they must get strong, they must agitate, and they must learn the divine art of dying for the honour of their women and their gods.

But they are hopeless cowards. For them non-violence has no meaning. It only serves as a mask to cover their abject cowardice. To preach to them non-violence sounds very much like preaching a sermon on

[1] A community of weavers
[2] Of 28-8-1924
[3] *Vide* Vol. XXIV, p. 142.

moderation in diet to the famine-stricken before providing them with the means of satisfying their hunger or is like feeding a sick and infirm man with food that even strong men find it difficult to digest. Far from doing him the least good, it does him incalculable harm.

If you follow this line of thought, will you not feel constrained to concede that for a real and lasting Hindu-Muslim unity the Hindus must develop the spirit of manliness? Must they not learn to vindicate the honour of their women and their temples? The weak are the greatest enemies of society. They corrupt both themselves and the strong, the latter by tempting them to bully. Weakness curseth both him that is weak, and him that bullies him. The Hindus may not retaliate in the sense of taking "a tooth for a tooth" and "an eye for an eye". They may not avenge themselves by violating the sanctity of Mussalman womanhood or by defiling or demolishing mosques. But since non-violence is beyond them, should you not advise them to learn to teach the wrongdoers a salutary lesson? Must they not develop the ability to defend themselves violently, before they could be expected to appreciate non-violence? Do not the good of the Hindus, real Hindu-Muslim friendship, and, for that matter, swaraj lie that way?

These thoughts have been agitating my mind now for a pretty long time. I tried to reason with myself, but I could not find a satisfactory answer to the questions named above. Hence I turn to you for guidance. I hope you will excuse me for encroaching upon your time with such a long letter. I shall be earnestly awaiting your reply to this in the columns of the *Young India* at your earliest convenience.

I would like to have my identity, though not my letter, kept private.

The earnestness of the writer is written in every part of the letter. The reasoning is sound so far as it goes. My difficulty, however, arises when we come to working out in practice the writer's propositions and their corollaries. The reader will find an outline of my scheme of work in the translation given elsewhere,[1] and made for me by Mahadev Desai, of an article I wrote in *Navajivan* last week to meet a difficulty that has arisen in Gujarat and in answer to questions put both by Hindu and Mussalman friends.

Mine is at the present moment a most pitiable position. Thousands, it may be said in truth, look to me for guidance at this time of trial for the nation. I have taken a leading part in the Khilafat agitation. I have unhesitatingly and fearlessly propounded the doctrine of giving without the stipulation of receiving anything in return. There is no flaw in my reasoning. But the

[1] *Vide* "Hindu-Muslim Unity", 14-9-1924.

correspondent's question is, "Is my reasoning relevant to the situation? Have Hindus anything to give? One can give without taking, only out of the fulness of possession."

Let us see.

It is common cause between the correspondent and myself that the average Hindu is a coward. How is he to be turned into a brave man? Is he to become brave by muscular development or by developing the bravery of the soul? My correspondent says, "The world has no place for the weak." He means, I imagine, "physically weak". If so, the proposition is unsound. There are many animals physically stronger than man and yet man lives. Many muscular races have died out and some of them are even now in the process of dying out. The proposition should therefore be, so far as man is concerned, "The world has no place for the weak in spirit."

The die is cast for me. The common factor of all religions is non-violence. Some inculcate more of it than others, all agree that you can never have too much of it. We must be sure, however, that it is non-violence and not a cloak for cowardice.

Now in order to arrive at a solution we must not think of the man in the street. We must think of ourselves who are behind the man in the street and pulling the strings. Let us take care that *we* do nothing out of fear. I hate duelling, but it has a romantic side to it. I am engaged in bringing that side of it to the fore. I would love to engage in a duel with the Big Brother. When we are both satisfied that there is no chance of unity without bloodshed, and that even we two cannot agree to live in peace, I must then invite the Big Brother to a duel with me. I know that he can twist me round his thick fingers and dash me to pieces. That day Hinduism will be free. Or, if he lets me kill him in spite of the strength of a giant, Islam in India will be free. He will have atoned for all the bullying by the average Mussalman. What I detest is the match between *goondas* of both the parties. Any peace based upon such a trial of strength will turn to bitterness in the end. The way to get rid of the Hindu cowardice is for the educated portion to fight the *goondas*. We may use sticks and other clean weapons. My ahimsa will allow the use of them. We shall be killed in the fight. But that will chasten both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. That would remove the Hindu cowardice in a moment. As things are going, each party will be the slaves of their own *goondas*. That means dominance of the military power. England fought for the predominance of the civil power and won and lived. Lord Curzon did much harm to us.

But he was certainly brave and right when he stood out for the predominance of civil authority. When Rome passed into the hands of the soldiers, it fell. My whole soul rises against the very idea of the custody of my religion passing into the hands of *goondas*. Confining myself, therefore, for the present to the Hindus, I must respectfully but earnestly warn the thinking Hindus against relying upon the assistance of *goondas* for the protection of their temples, themselves and their wives and children. With the weak bodies they have, they must be determined to stand at their post and to die fighting or without fighting. It would have been a glorious death for Jamnalalji and his colleagues, if they had died in the act of securing peace. It will be a glorious death for Dr. Moonje or me, when we defend temples single-handed. That were bravery of the spirit indeed.

But there are many less heroic things to do. We must find out the true facts about Nagpur. I am in correspondence with Dr. Moonje about it. I am wooing the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi to let me know the root causes of the trouble there. I have offered to arbitrate singly or in company. They have not yet repelled my advances. There is no authentic story of the unfortunate trouble. I must refuse to lose my head. I am not satisfied that the Mussalmans alone are to blame for everything in every place. I do not know what was the first cause. I do know that an unscrupulous Press on either side is today poisoning the minds of the simple Hindus and the simple Mussalmans. I do know also that more poison is being spread in private conversations, and incidents are exaggerated beyond all recognition. I am going to leave no stone unturned to reach the bottom of this sea of darkness, doubt and despair. A true statement of facts to date is the preliminary indispensable to a correct solution of the tension that threatens to paralyse all healthy public activity. My intense desire to reach a solution of the trouble is not the least among the causes that have impelled me to a complete surrender to the Swarajists and all concerned.

Young India, 18-9-1924

122. *AN EXPLANATION*

Some Mussalman friends of Delhi have been to me and expressed their surprise at my saying in *Young India* of August 21 that there was a Mussalman organization at the back of the desecration of Hindu temples and that these desecrations were unprovoked. The friends tell me that my statement about organization has been interpreted to mean an organization on behalf of Mussalmans as a community, and that about provocation to mean provocation of any kind whatsoever. I told my visitors that by an organization I did not mean an organization formed or instigated by the Mussalman community, but an organization of some individuals. I had no data to say how many.

These friends told me, as Hakim Sahib and Maulana Mahomed Ali had told me on my arrival in Delhi, that they knew of no such organization and that, had there been any, they should know it. I told them that, whilst their repudiation shook my confidence in my statement, I was not prepared to dismiss from my mind the idea of an organization of the kind mentioned by me. So many informants, including Mussalmans, had told me about it before the recent desecrations. When they happened, I could not but come to the conclusion that they were not the chance work of frenzy, but that they took that particular shape by reason of organized instigation. I should be glad to find that I was totally mistaken, and as soon as I was convinced of my error of judgment, I should readily make the needed correction. It has been suggested that the organization might well be from a Government agency. I said I was not prepared to deny the Government's share in these disturbances. I should certainly not be surprised to discover that the directing mind was Government agency.

As for provocation, the *Young India* writing, I told my visitors, quite clearly showed that I had referred to provocation in kind. It says, "Presumption is against such provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on Hindu-Muslim tension, but I have failed to receive any proof in support of them."

My visitors produced before me a Hyderabad journal which is said to hold that there was such Hindu provocation. If it could be proved, whilst I would still hold under every conceivable circumstance desecration of temples and equally of mosques to be un-

justified from my point of view, I admitted that my condemnation would lose much of its force. I should be deeply hurt and ashamed, if the alleged Hindu desecration in Gulburga was found to be true.

My visitors next asked me whether there was not a counter-organization on the part of Hindus. I told them I know of no Hindu organization instigating desecration of mosques, but I did see that there was an organization of some Hindus, not an inconsiderable number, who were bent on provoking, writing insultingly of Islam and grossly exaggerating Mussalman misdeeds. This was unpardonable. In this respect, however, both parties were equally to blame. The business of every well-wisher of the country was to condemn those parties who promoted mischief and to leave no stone unturned to stop it. I told my visitors that, if I was permitted and assisted whole-heartedly by both the sections, I was prepared, singly if necessary and assisted if possible by colleagues, to conduct an inquiry and find out who started the mischief, how it spread and how it could be remedied.

Young India, 18-9-1924

123. STATEMENT ANNOUNCING 21-DAY FAST[1]

September 18, 1924

The following is the statement which Mr. Gandhi issued on September 18, at Delhi in announcing his fast of 21 days.

The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My helplessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am therefore imposing on myself a fast of 21 days commencing from today and ending on Wednesday, October 8. I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and a prayer.

As penance I need not have taken the public into my confidence, but I publish the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and Mussalmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of

[1] This was communicated to the Associated Press of India by Gandhiji's private secretary at 2 o'clock in the morning.

all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts.

Young India, 25-9-1924

124. LETTER TO ANNIE BESANT

DELHI,
September 18, 1924

DEAR DR. BESANT,

I thank you for your letter. You know of my fast. I shall not therefore have the privilege of presiding at the celebration[1] of 2nd October. Of course, I shall hope to send a message.

Regarding the Congress passing the constitution I see many difficulties. But I am keeping an open mind. We shall discuss it when we can meet. I do not expect any untoward result from the fast.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

125. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

September 18, 1924

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letter. I did not understand your question. Certainly your sister could send socks of her own knitting for the poor of Malabar. I will not go into the whole reasoning about my previous declaration and the present relaxation. I do not discuss it because I can understand your point of view and defend mine as correct from the only best standpoint. In any case there

[1] Annie Besant's 78th birthday and the jubilee of her public life. The function actually took place on October 1 at Cowasji Jehangir Hall, Bombay. For Gandhiji's message, *vide* "Message on Annie Besant's Birthday", before 1-10-1924.

is no enmity or preferential discrimination. It is a matter purely of duty.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

[PS.]

You must have received my postcard yesterday. I am quite well.

C. F. ANDREWS, ESQ.
SHANTINIKETAN
Via BOLPUR
E.I. RLY.

From a photostat: G.N. 2616

126. LETTER TO RADHA GANDHI

Bhadarva Vad 5 [September 18, 1924][1]

CHI. RADHA,

I got your letter today. You must have heard the news of my 21 days' fast. No one there should worry. It is but proper for one to suffer any hardships that may come to one while discharging one's duty; one's friends should be happy about it. I hope you have now recovered completely. You should let me know what you read, what you eat, how much you walk, whether you can spin or not, etc. Let me know also what Rukhi is reading, how she is keeping. I have to stay here for the present at any rate. Let everyone there read this.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. RADHA
C/o KHUSHAL GANDHI
NAVUN PARUN
RAJKOT
KATHIAWAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6035. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

[1] From the postmark

127. *DISCUSSION WITH MAHADEV DESAI*[1]

[*September 18, 1924*][2]

We, who were privileged to be with Gandhiji, when he took that momentous decision to fast for 21 days, were also privileged to engage him in long discussions during the first week of the fast and my article produces the substance of two important conversations—one with me and one with Maulana Shaukat Ali[3].

[GANDHIJI:] Do you see the meaning of my fast on account of the Bombay and Chauri Chaura incidents?[4]

[MAHADEV DESAI:] Yes.

Then why cannot you see the meaning of this fast?

[M.D.] There you fasted by way of penance for what you thought was a crime committed by you. There is no such thing here. There is not the semblance of an offence that may be attributed to you.

What a misconception! In Chauri Chaura the culprits were those who had never seen me, never known me. Today the culprits are those who know me and even profess to love me.

[M.D.] Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali are trying their best to quench the conflagration. But it is beyond them. Some men may be beyond their reach, even your reach. What can they do, what can you do? The situation will take time to improve.

That is another story; Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali are pure gold. They are trying their best, I know. But the situation is out of our hands today. It was in our hands six months ago. I know my fast will upset them. Indirectly it might have an effect on their minds, but it was not meant to produce an effect on anyone's mind.

[M.D.] That's all right, but you have yet to tell me where your error lay for which you are doing this penance.

My error! Why, I may be charged with having committed a breach of faith with the Hindus. I asked them to befriend Muslims.

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article, "The Inner Meaning of the Fast"

[2] From *Navajivan*, 28-9-1924

[3] *Vide* "Discussion with Shaukat Ali", 19-9-1924.

[4] *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 462-5 and Vol. XXII, pp. 415-21.

I asked them to lay their lives and their property at the disposal of the Mussalmans for the protection of their holy places. Even today I am asking them to practise ahimsa, to settle quarrels by dying but not by killing. And what do I find to be the result? How many temples have been desecrated? How many sisters come to me with complaints? As I was saying to Hakimji yesterday, Hindu women are in mortal terror of Mussalman *goondas*. In many places they fear to go out alone. I had a letter from . . . How can I bear the way in which his little children were molested? How can I now ask the Hindus to put up with everything patiently? I gave them the assurance that the friendship of Mussalmans was bound to bear good fruit. I asked them to befriend them, regardless of the result. It is not in my power today to make good that assurance, neither is it in the power of Mahomed Ali or Shaukat Ali. Who listens to me? And yet I must ask the Hindus even today to die and not to kill. I can only do so by laying down my own life. I can teach them the way to die by my own example. There is no other way. . . I launched non-co-operation. Today I find that people are non-co-operating against one another, without any regard for non-violence. What is the reason? Only this, that I myself am not completely non-violent. If I were practising non-violence to perfection, I should not have seen the violence I see around me today. My fast is therefore a penance. I blame no one. I blame only myself. I have lost the power where-with to appeal to people. Defeated and helpless I must submit my petition in His Court. Only He will listen, no one else.

It was a torrent that I could hardly catch, much less reproduce.

[M.D.] But, Bapu, should the penance take only this shape, and no other? Is fasting prescribed by our religion?

Certainly, what did the *rishis* of old do? It is unthinkable that they ate anything during their penances—in some cases, gone through in caves, and for hundreds of years. Parvati who did penance to win Siva would not touch even the leaves of trees, much less fruit or food. Hinduism is full of penance and prayer. I have decided on this fast with deeper deliberation than I gave to any of my previous fasts. I had such a fast in my mind, even when I conceived and launched non-co-operation. At that time, I said to myself, "I am placing this terrible weapon in the hands of the people. If it is abused I must pay the price by laying down my life." That moment seems to have arrived today. The object of the previous fasts was limited. The object of this is unlimi-

ted, and there is boundless love at the back of it. I am today bathing in that ocean of love.

Young India, 23-10-1924

128. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI[1]

[On or after *September 18, 1924*]

CANCELLATION FAST CANCELLATION SELF. AM FASTING TO LIVE NOT DIE UNLESS GOD WILLS OTHERWISE. DON'T WORRY.

GANDHI

The Hindu, 29-9-1924

129. TELEGRAM[2]

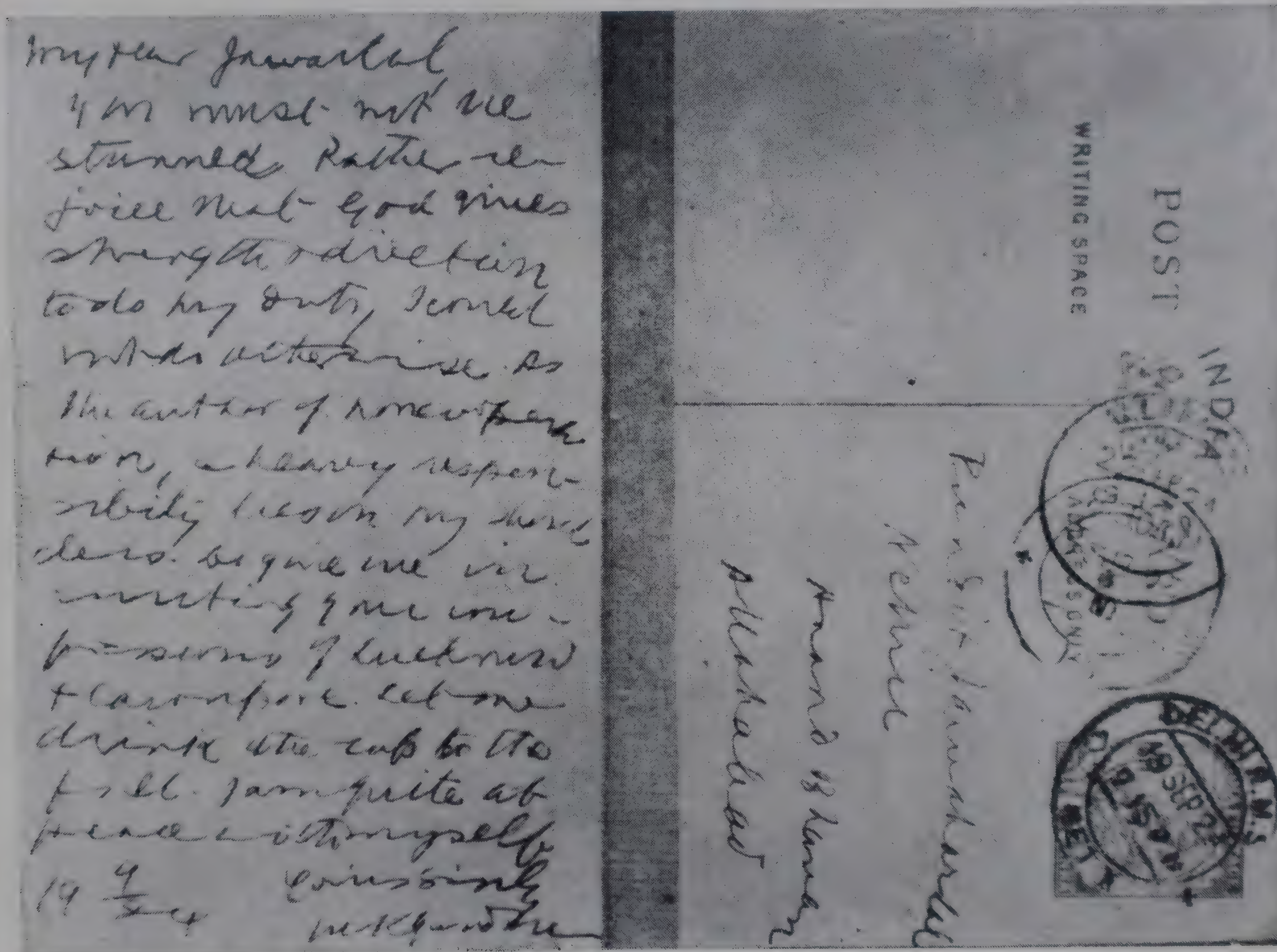
[After *September 18, 1924*]

TELEGRAM JUST RECEIVED. CERTAINLY EXPECT SURVIVE TWENTY-ONE DAYS GOD WILLING. INTENTION WAS FORTY DAYS' FAST. BUT FIXED TWENTY-ONE DAYS IN HOPE FINISHING IT WITHOUT UNDUE STRAIN. HAVE FULLEST REASON FOR DECISION AND NOT CONSULTING FRIENDS. MUST NOT WORRY OVER PERFORMANCE OBVIOUS DUTY HOWEVER PAINFUL. FAST DIRECT RESULT OF RELIGION AS I CONCEIVE IT.

From a photostat : S.N. 10178

[1] In reply to his telegram of September 18 urging Gandhiji to give up his fast, "which would mean nothing short of death in view of his present health".

[2] This is drafted on the reverse of a letter dated September 18, 1924, from C. F. Andrews to Mahadev Desai.


My dear Jawaharlal

You must not be stunned. Rather rejoice that God gives strength & direction to do my duty. I could not do otherwise. As the author of non-cooperation, a heavy responsibility lies on my shoulders. Do give me the [illegible] of the possessions of Lucknow & Cawnpore. Let me drink the cup to the full. I am quite at peace with myself.

Yours sincerely

M. K. Gandhi

19 9/24

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Anand Bhawan

Allahabad



DURING THE FAST, WITH INDIRA

130. GOD IS ONE

September 19, 1924

Who can name Him, and knowing what he says,
Say, "I believe in Him"? And who can feel,
And, with self-violence, to conscious wrong
Hardening his heart, say, "I believe Him not!"?
The All-embracing, All-sustaining One,
Say, does He not embrace, sustain, include
Thee?—Me—Himself? Bends not the sky above?
And earth, on which we are, is it not firm?
And over us, with constant kindly smile,
The sleepless stars keep everlasting watch!
Am I not here gazing into thine eyes?
    And does not All, that is,
    —Seen and unseen—mysterious all—
    Around thee, and within,
    Untiring agency,
    Press on thy heart and mind?
—Fill thy whole heart with it—and, when thou art
Lost in the consciousness of happiness,
    Then call it what thou wilt
    Happiness!—Heart! —Love!—God!
    I have no name for it!
    Feeling is all in all!
    Name is but sound and reek,
    A mist around the glow of Heaven.

—Goethe's *Faust*

Last Thursday night, some Mussalman friends called on me by appointment. They appeared to me to be earnest and sincere. They had much to say against *shuddhi* and *sangathan*. I have said my say about these movements already.[1] So far as possible I do not wish during the privileged weeks to say anything on matters of controversy. I wish to engage the attention of the reader on the solution they offered. They said: "We believe in the divinity of the Vedas. We believe in Shri Krishnaji Maharaj and Ramachandraji Maharaj (the adjectives are theirs). Why cannot Hindus believe in the divinity of the Koran and say with us that there is

[1] *Vide* "Hindu-Muslim Unity", 14-9-1924.

no God but God and Mahomed is His Prophet? Ours is not an exclusive religion, but it is essentially inclusive."

I told them that the solution was not quite so simple as they put it. The formula they suggested might be good enough for the cultured few, but it would prove ineffective for the man in the street. For the Hindus cow-protection and the playing of music even near the mosque was the substance of Hinduism, and for the Mussalmans cow-killing and prohibition of music was the substance of Islam. It was, therefore, necessary that the Hindus abandon the idea of compelling Mussalmans to stop cow-killing, and Mussalmans the idea of compelling the Hindus to stop music. The regulation of cow-slaughter and playing of music must be left to the goodwill of the respective communities. Each practice would assume a becoming proportion with the growth of the tolerant spirit. But I do not propose to elaborate here this ticklish question.

I wish to examine the attractive formula presented by the Mussalman friends and state what is at least acceptable to me; and as my instinct is wholly Hindu, I know that what I am about to say will be acceptable to the vast mass of Hindus.

In fact it is the average Mussalman who will not accept the divinity of the Vedas and the other Hindu scriptures, or Krishna or Rama as prophets or incarnations of the Deity. With the Hindu it is a new-fangled notion to revile the Koran and the Prophet. I have known the Prophet spoken of with reverence in Hindu circles. There are even Hindu songs paying tribute to Islam.

Take the first half of the formula. God is certainly One. He has no second. He is unfathomable, unknowable and unknown to the vast majority of mankind. He is everywhere. He sees without eyes, and hears without ears. He is formless and indivisible. He is uncreated, has no father, mother or child; and yet He allows Himself to be worshipped as father, mother, wife and child. He allows himself even to be worshipped as stock and stone, although He is none of these things. He is the most elusive. He is the nearest to us if we would but know the fact. But He is farthest from us when we do not want to realize His omnipresence. There are many gods in the Vedas. Other scriptures call them angels. But the Vedas sing of only one God.

I have no hesitation in regarding the Koran as revealed, as I have none in regarding the Bible, the *Zend-Avesta*, the *Granth Saheb* and any other clean scriptures as revealed. Revelation is the exclusive property of no nation, no tribe. If I know Hinduism at all, it is essentially inclusive and ever-growing, ever-responsive. It gives the freest scope to imagination, speculation and reason.

I have found not the slightest difficulty in Hindu circles about evoking reverence for the Koran and the Prophet. But I have found difficulty in Mussalman circles about evoking the same reverence for the Vedas or the incarnations. I had a very good Mussalman client in South Africa. He is, alas, dead now. The relation of client and counsel developed into one of close companionship and mutual regard. We often had religious discussions. My friend, though not learned in any sense of the term, had an intellect as sharp as a razor. He knew everything of the Koran. He knew something of other religions also. He was interested in my accepting Islam. I said to him, "I can pay full respect to the Koran and the Prophet, why do you ask me to reject the Vedas and the incarnations? They have helped me to be what I am. I find the greatest consolation from the *Bhagavad Gita* and Tulsidas's *Ramayana*. I frankly confess that the Koran, the Bible and the other scriptures of the world, in spite of my great regard for them, do not move me as do the *Gita* of Krishna and the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas." The friend despaired of me and had no hesitation in saying that there must be something wrong with me. His, however, is not an exceptional case because I have since met many Mussalman friends who have held the same view. I do, however, believe that this is a passing phase. I share Justice Ameer Ali's view that Islam in the days of Harun-al-Rashid and Maman was the most tolerant amongst the world's religions. But there was a reaction against the liberalism of the teachers of their times. The reactionaries had many learned, able and influential men amongst them and they very nearly overwhelmed the liberal and tolerant teachers and philosophers of Islam. We in India are still suffering from the effect of that reaction. But I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam has sufficient in itself to become purged of illiberalism and intolerance. We are fast reaching the time when the acceptance of the formula suggested by the friends will be a common thing among mankind. The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail, but is a sacrilege. The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts. For Hindus to expect Islam, Christianity or Zoroastrianism to be driven out of India is as idle a dream as it would be for Mussalmans to have only Islam of their imagination rule the

world. But if belief in One God and the race of His Prophets in a never-ending chain is sufficient for Islam, then we are all Mussalmans, but we are also all Hindus and Christians. Truth is the exclusive property of no single scripture.

Young India, 25-9-1924

131. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[1]

September 19, 1924

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

You must not be stunned. Rather rejoice that God gives strength and direction to do my duty. I could not do otherwise. As the author of non-co-operation, a heavy responsibility lies on my shoulders. Do give me in writing your impressions of Lucknow and Cawnpore. Let me drink the cup to the full. I am quite at peace with myself.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 41

132. LETTER TO LAKSHMI

[*September 19, 1924*][2]

CHI. LAKSHMI,

This letter too is for all. But should I call Lakshmi a bad girl or a good girl because the boys say so? Will she not keep her promise and write a letter? I am looking forward to a beautifully written letter. I remember all the children during my fast, and I even ask myself, "Do all the children spin regularly? Do they study? Do they speak the truth? Do they obey the rules?" Who will tell me?

[1] *Vide* illustration facing p. 176.
[2] From the postmark

I get immense peace from my fast. No one need worry about me.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. LAKSHMI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 5645. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

133. DISCUSSION WITH SHAUKAT ALI[1]

[*September 19, 1924*][2]

Maulana Shaukat Ali came the next day. Maulana Mahomed Ali had built much on his coming, for he had fondly hoped that he would probably shake Gandhiji's resolve. Indeed Gandhiji had promised him that he would give up the vow if Shaukat or he convinced him that the fast was morally or in any other way wrong. The long talk with him was however of no avail, as far as the continuance of the fast was concerned, but it threw even more light on the inner meaning.

[SHAUKAT ALI:] What have we done, Mahatmaji, to remedy the situation? Almost nothing! You have been preaching through your paper, but you have yet undertaken no long journey. Pray travel through the affected areas and purify the atmosphere. This fast is hardly the way to fight the wrong.

[GANDHIJI:] It is for me a pure matter of religion. I looked around me, and questioned myself, and found that I was powerless. What could I effect even by means of a long tour? The masses suspect us today. Pray do not believe that the Hindus in Delhi fully trust me. They were not unanimous in asking me to arbitrate. And naturally. There have been murders. How can I hope to be heard by those who have suffered? I would ask them to forgive those who have murdered their dearest ones. Who would listen to me? The Anjuman refuses to listen to Hakimji. When we were in the midst of negotiations about their arbitration I heard of Kohat. I asked myself, "What are you going to do now?" I am an irrepressible optimist, but I always base my optimism on solid facts. You are also an irrepressible optimist, but you at times base yours

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article, "The Inner Meaning of the Fast"

[2] From *Navajivan*, 28-9-1924

on sand. No one will listen to you today. In Visnagar in Gujarat they gave a cold shoulder to Mr. Abbas Tyabji and Mahadev. In Ahmedabad a storm was nipped in the bud. Some trouble was brewing in Umreth when I left Gujarat. That I should be a passive witness of all these, shows the depth of my incapacity. There are hundreds of sisters whose love and affection I still possess. They are in mortal fear today. To them I want to show by my own example the way to die.

Fight I do not mind, if it be fair, honourable, brave fighting between the two communities. But today it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice. They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to court, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record? How am I to make them brave? You are trying your best. But I should also try my best. I must recover the power to react on them.

[S. A.] No, you have not failed. They listened to you; they were listening to you. In your absence they had other advisers. They listened to their advice and took to evil ways. They will still see the folly of their ways, I am sure. You have done much to reduce the poison in the popular mind. I would not bother about these disturbances at all. I would simply go and tell them, "Devils, play this game to your hearts' content. God is still there. You may kill one another. You cannot kill Him." Do not, Sir, come in the way of the Lord. You are wrestling with Him. Let Him have His way.

I am wrestling with Him! If there is pride or defiance in me it is all over with me. Dear man, this fast is the result of several days' continued prayers. I have got up from sleep at 3 o'clock in the night and have asked Him what to do. On the 17th of September the answer came like a flash! If I have erred, He will forgive me. All I have done, all I am doing, is done in a fully godfearing spirit, and in the house of a godfearing Mussalman at that. My religion says that only he who is prepared to suffer can pray to God. Fasting and prayer are common injunctions in my religion. But I know of this sort of penance even in Islam. In the life of the Prophet I have read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed, and forbade others to copy him. Someone asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing. "Because I live on food divine," he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God. The Prophet had revelations not in moments of ease and luxurious living. He fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received the revelations. Even at this

moment I see before me the picture of the Prophet thus fasting and praying. My dear Shaukat, I cannot bear the people accusing you and your brother of having broken your promises to me. I cannot bear the thought of such an accusation. I must die for it. This fast is but to purify myself, to strengthen myself. Let me not be misunderstood. I am speaking to you as though I was a Mussalman, because I have cultivated that respect for Islam which you have for it. After I have fasted and prayed I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam, to appeal to both the communities. It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh. We have to fight hooliganism and we are not sufficiently spiritually strong to fight it.

At this point Shaukat Ali changed the line of his argument.

[S.A.] Are you not even bound to consider what a shock it will be to the country, this long fast of yours?

No! For man so often deceives himself! He often does things to please others, which he should have avoided. Religion therefore teaches him to stand before the world after having taken a particular resolve. What vanity, to think that the world would be shocked at one's own great penance! And whose wishes are we to consider? There would be no limit. Had Rama stopped to consult and argue, he would never have gone on *vanavasa* and rid the earth of its suffering. He waited for no one's advice. He went forth. For he prized his plighted word more than his life. Only he can take great resolves who has indomitable faith in God and has fear of God.

[S.A.] One more question. Do you need to consult no one before arriving at such a decision? You need not even take into consideration the effect it would have on your health or body?

No. It is a matter between me and my Maker. And if I must consult someone, I had better not take the vow at all. You talk of the effect on my health and body? Well, if I am too weak to stand it I may die. What is the body worth? Whilst I was in jail I read with rapturous delight the lives of the Companions of the Prophet. There is a story that Hazarat Umar sent a present of 500 dinars to someone. He shrank from it, and began to cry. His wife asked him why he was crying. He said, "*Maya*—unreality—has come to me. What will happen to me?" The dinars were a present from such a holy man as Hazrat Umar. But he shrank from it because it was unreal, evanescent. And so is life. Let God

keep this body if He has still to make some use of it. Let it perish if it has fulfilled His purpose. In fact, I had thought of going on a permanent vow of fasting if matters did not improve after the fast terminated. Hakimji asked me not to think of it. "How can I cast it out of my mind?" said I. It is in my bones, it is part of my very being. I would ask Mussalmans to befriend the Hindus, if they think it is not contrary to their religion. If they think and tell me it is contrary to their religion, then I am sure I should have no cause to live any more. I should die. I had a plain talk with Khwaja Hassan Nizami Sahib also the other day. I told him, "Why do you try to convert the waifs and strays and the untouchables? Better convert me, so that after I am converted many more might follow me. If those poor people embrace Islam, they will not do so because they understand the beauty of Islam, but for other reasons. Islam will not be a whit richer for them."

It was an impressive dialogue. I have not even done bare justice to it. Shaukat Ali seemed quite overpowered. As he rose he said, "Three things I pray for every day; the first is Hindu-Muslim unity; the second, that my mother may live to see Islam and India free; the third, that Mahatma Gandhi's mission may be fulfilled."

Young India, 23-10-1924

134. TELEGRAM TO "OUTLOOK"[1]

[On or after *September 19, 1924*]

"OUTLOOK"
LAHORE

THANKS WIRE. TRUCE HARDLY MEETS SITUATION. WHAT IS REQUIRED IS ELIMINATION POISON EXAGGERATION MISREPRESENTATION INCITEMENT FROM PAPERS BOTH HINDU AND MUSSALMAN. I AM INTERESTED IN LIVING FOR HEART UNITY. NOT FOR ARTIFICIAL PATCHWORK. WOULD ASK YOU THEREFORE DIRECT YOUR EFFORT TO SECURE THAT CONSUMMATION.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 10493

[1] In reply to addressee's telegram of September 19 which read: "Muslim papers *Zamindar*, *Siasat* agree on *Outlook*'s appeal observe week's truce from tomorrow. . . . Please wire message of encouragement."

135. *NOTES*

September 20, 1924

SPINNING MONTH BY MONTH

From 2,780 to 4,908 is not a bad rise in one month in the number of spinners. The reader will note that the rise is appreciable in the number of members as well as non-members. Gujarat still holds the first place. But Andhra is evidently running a close race. Karnatak's jump from 41 to 362, and Tamilnad's from 90 to 456 is distinctly encouraging. As a matter of fact Karnatak should come first class, seeing that Karnatak is to have the honour of having the Congress session this year. More returns for the month have still to come, and they should show a distinct rise. If the progress continues at this rate, we should soon have a respectable total. The reader will understand that these totals are by no means exhaustive of all the voluntary spinners. The number of irregular voluntary spinners is at least double the number of regular spinners. And naturally these totals take no note of thousands of paid spinners. If only those who have begun regular spinning continue at least till we have attained swaraj (and this is by no means an immoderate expectation), we are bound to hasten its advent.

THE PRESIDENT'S PRIZE

Maulana Mahomed Ali on whom spinning is daily growing and who has been spinning even while conducting public business for hours sometimes, and who insisted, for the sake of finishing 2,000 yards for the past spinning month, on spinning till midnight, has asked me to announce a prize of five substantial charkhas to the province that would beat Gujarat during his term of office. He intends that these charkhas might be presented to the most deserving poor spinners of the winning province. The wheels would be after the latest Sabarmati pattern. It is hard task to beat Gujarat in a spinning competition so far as the number of spinners and the quantity of yarn are concerned. Bengal, Karnatak, Andhra, Tamilnad may beat Gujarat as to fineness of yarn; but Gujarat will not take a beating lightly as to the number of voluntary spinners and even less as to quantity. But as the Maulana's prize is confined to the number of spinners, so far as I can judge, the pressure of competition is likely to be felt from

Andhra, Bengal, Tamilnad and Karnatak. I hope that the Congressmen will not consider the value of the prize, but will appreciate the fact of the President of the Congress awarding it. I would like the competition to be serious and effective. There are only three months for winning the prize. If all the provinces will make an effort, I know that it would give the greatest satisfaction to the Maulana Saheb, for he has realized the national importance of voluntary spinning. He takes the keenest delight in showing the specimens of his yarn and making daily improvement in the evenness and fineness of his production.

Young India, 25-9-1924

136. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

CARE "COMRADE",
DELHI,
September 20, 1924

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I wanted to write to you earlier inquiring about your health. Your wire to Hakimji[1] reminds me of my intention. Do please give yourself perfect rest.

Do not feel distressed. For me the fast was a religious duty. I want friends to rejoice that God has given me strength to go through the fire.

With love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, p. 139

[1] Hakim Ajmal Khan

137. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Bhadarva Vad 7 [*September 20, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

My fast is for 21 days. It began on Wednesday so that today is the third day. It will end on Wednesday, 8th October. I undertook the fast because without it it was impossible to meet the demands of duty. Hence you should not worry. I am enjoying perfect peace. You should not think of running down to me either. You may come during the third week. I too will wish to see you then. "Shrimati" has been written in the address. It should be so [on the address]. You will never cease to be a daughter to me. I have forgotten what I used to write to you when you were at Deolali. There is no harm in bathing immediately after taking a hip-bath. Try another experiment. Buy a small yellow bottle. Fill it with clean water and put it in the sun for three hours. Drink two ounces from it before going to sleep at night. Make it a practice to drink this much water after it is heated in the sun. You need not worry if the water has cooled down. The idea is that the water absorbs the rays of the sun passing through the yellow medium. It is said that the water treated in this way helps bowel movement.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIMATI VASUMATI PANDIT
C/O MESSRS STRAUSS & CO.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 457. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] From the postmark

138. NOTE

September 21, 1924

HELPLESSNESS, NOT HOPELESSNESS

I observe that in my note on fasting I have been made to say[1]—"My hopelessness is still more unbearable." My statement mentions "helplessness" and not "hopelessness". A man with a grain of faith in God never loses hope, because he ever believes in the ultimate triumph of Truth. A man of God never strives after untruth and therefore he can never lose hope. On the contrary, his hope shines the brightest "amid the encircling gloom". But my helplessness is a very patent fact before me. I may not ignore it. I must ever confess it. There is a beautiful Tamil proverb which says: "God is the sole help of the helpless." The truth of this never came upon me with so much force as it has come today. Handling large masses of men, dealing with them, speaking and acting for them is no joke for a man whose capacity God has so circumscribed. One has, therefore, to be ever on the watch. And the reader may rest assured that I took the final step after I had realized to the full my utter helplessness. And I cried out to God even like Draupadi when she seemed to be abandoned by her five brave protectors. And her cry did not ascend to the throne of the Almighty in vain. That cry must not be from the lip. It has to be from the deepest recesses of one's heart. And, therefore, such a cry is only possible when one is in anguish. Mine has expressed itself in a fast which is by no means adequate for the issues involved. My heart continually says:

Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Young India, 25-9-1924

[1] Evidently some newspaper reproducing the "Statement Announcing Fast", 18-9-1924, had printed "hopelessness" instead of "helplessness". *Vide* "Letter to Devdas Gandhi", 21-9-1924.

139. THE HALF-HOUR DRILL

September 21, 1924

As a humble soldier I have no right to resent anything my chief writes[1] or says about me. . . . What did Mahatma Gandhi mean, and what warrant had he, when he made an assertion that I was physically unable to sit down to spin for half an hour? Any clean work that gives me liberty and makes me and my country free must command every ounce of energy in my big body. I can and will spin not only for half an hour, but for the whole day, if it will break—as I know it will—the chains of slavery that bind us so tight. My tutor in Bombay will certify that, during the four days that I was in Bombay, for the first three days I struggled over two hours on the wheel to spin a few feet of bad yarn. On the third day I was better and, thank God, on the fourth I knew how to adjust the movements of my left hand with that of the right. I cannot tell how proud I was to send a *tola* of yarn to the A.I.K.B. as my quota. I see that it has drawn many witty remarks from friends. The *Zamindar* said that a man weighing thousands of *tolas* sent only a solitary *tola* as the result of his labours. I appreciate the remark. This month I was ordered to go and tour in Kathiawar. Work in Kathiawar for a man of my reputation meant an obstacle race. D.O. letters between the Political Agent and the State authorities were being exchanged profusely. . . . Add to this, *fatwas*[2] and pamphlets flying about asking people not to help a man whom they accused of being a Kaffir-unbeliever and whom they accused of calling Gandhi his god and thus blaspheming God Himself! Under these circumstances, if I gave a *tola* of yarn along with silver twice *my* weight—for which I was deputed—I think I acquitted myself not badly. . . .

I was very happy to see and also to report to my chief lying on his Bed of Sorrow under my brother's roof at Delhi, that just before leaving Bombay I called on Mrs. Naidu and that it did my heart good to see that, while lying on her sofa suffering from a bad heart, she was struggling with her spinning-wheel, with a determination to learn it and do it regularly. Shankerlal Banker would be glad that the whole of the Khilafat office spins, and Dr. Ansari is an expert spinner and does it whenever he can snatch a few minutes from his humanitarian work. Every man and woman and child in India, Hindu or Muslim, Parsi or Christian, Sikh or Jew, rich or poor, who wants to join God's army,

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 21-8-1924, sub-title, "Ali Brothers' Quota".

[2] Decrees of a Muslim divine

must qualify himself or herself by half an hour's drill on the spinning-wheel.

SHAUKAT ALI
Khadim-i-Kaba

I rather like the rebuke administered to me by Maulana Shaukat Ali. Although I am in the surrendering mood all along the line, I did not know that I would have to suffer the pangs of surrender even to the Big Brother. I thought that his big and unwieldy body would not respond to the gentle art of spinning. I tender my apology to him for my having underrated his ability for lighter labours. I should be content to be humbled a thousand times on the Maulana's conditions. What is my humiliation if the country thereby gains? And I count it no small gain to have an indignant repudiation from the Maulana that anybody should dare to excuse him for lighter labours because of his bulk. No task is too light or too heavy for him, if thereby the country benefits. I wish that every worker accepted that rigid test for himself. The information given by the Maulana about the staff of the Khilafat office having set to work, Dr. Ansari having begun spinning in the midst of heavy, incessant professional calls upon his time, must make Shankerlal Banker's mouth water. If this enthusiasm continues, I expect a splendid response from the Mussalmans. It speaks volumes for the Maulana's popularity that, in spite of the libellous leaflets to which he has referred, his Kathiawar tour brought to the coffers of the Khilafat Committee no less than 25,000 rupees in cash and promises of nearly ten thousand. The writers of the leaflets do not know the basis of our connection. Dissimilar in everything else, as I have already pointed out, there is one common bond between us. We are both impatient of slavery. We resent the curtailment of any human being's legitimate liberty. And therefore we have accepted the slavery of God. In order that we may be able to look the whole of the human kind straight in the face and even oppose it, if necessary, we have become as clay in the Potter's hands. He can mould us as He will, crush us, toss us about, still we are His. That is the only cement between us. I admit that it is adhesive, and therefore binds us indissolubly. To say, then, that the Maulana worships me as his God is not only, as he says, a blasphemy of the Almighty, but it betrays the grossest ignorance of us and our relations.

Young India, 25-9-1924

140. OUR DUTY TO THEM

September, 21 1924

With an artist's pen Mr. Andrews in his article[1] on the "Aboriginal Tribes" has combined three things. He has supported the fervent appeal of Mr. A. V. Thakkar for funds for the Bhil Seva Mandal in the Panchmahals. I heartily echo Mr. Andrews' sentiments. Mr. Thakkar needs no introduction from me. He had dedicated himself to the service of the motherland long before my return to India and becoming a famous man. His services in connection with the administration of famine relief organized by Gujarat for the help of the distressed in Orissa are still fresh in our memory. He has endeared himself to the untouchables of Gujarat by his single-minded devotion to their cause. But his restless nature has found a class of people in Gujarat more submerged and therefore more in need of a lifting hand than the untouchables themselves. He has therefore become the high priest of the simple *Bhils* of the Panchmahals. I hope that Mr. Thakkar's appeal will not fall upon deaf ears.

In speaking about the aboriginal tribes it was impossible for Mr. Andrews to omit the name of his friend, disciple and fellow-worker, Willie Pearson. He loses no opportunity of paying a well-deserved tribute to the memory of one of the noblest of Englishmen who dedicated his all to the service of India. When Mr. Gokhale[2] asked Mr. Andrews at a moment's notice to go to the rescue of the satyagrahis of South Africa, Willie Pearson volunteered his services and accompanied Mr. Andrews to South Africa. For me it was love at first sight between these Englishmen and myself. Pearson's noble features with the frank, benign and bewitching expression in his eyes rise before me as I dictate these lines. I saw Pearson at work in South Africa and again at Shantiniketan. More selflessness and more devotion to duty it would be difficult to find. No honest toil was beneath Pearson's dignity. For him the lower the work was, the greater was the dignity. He was the first at Shantiniketan to volunteer his services for cleaning the drains of its kitchen and the sca-

[1] In *Young India*, 2-10-1924

[2] G. K. Gokhale (1866-1915); founder of the Servants of India Society; President, Indian National Congress at Banaras in 1905

vengers' quarters. Pearson's work was no less heroic, because it was non-political in the conventional sense of the term. Let it be remembered, however, that whilst in Japan Pearson wrote his furious indictment against British exploitation and dominance which brought him trouble which he never minded. Whilst he was lying on his death-bed, he dictated a will in which he did not forget a boy in Shantiniketan whom he loved as dearly as his own son. On his death the Poet issued an appeal for 25,000 rupees to perpetuate his memory. The money was to be devoted to build a Pearson Hospital in Shantiniketan. When I was taking my convalescence at Juhu, and Andrews had appointed himself as my guardian-angel, with a heart full of love and sorrow he told me that there was very poor response to the Poet's appeal. I soothed him by saying that after all Pearson was not much known to the Indian public, and that therefore we who knew him so well ought not to fret for want of their support or feel uncharitable towards them. I told him too that, when I found a natural occasion, I would take up the Poet's appeal and try to enlist the support of the public for the memorial. Mr. Andrews has given me the opportunity. I now invite the readers of *Young India* to contribute their mite. Over three thousand rupees have been collected. Twenty-one thousand rupees is nothing for the generous public to find.

The third thing Mr. Andrews has brought in is the spinning-wheel, probably for my sake. But I know that a time is coming when that simple wheel will no longer have to depend upon me for its existence. The highest in the land who feel for the poor will be bound to support it. There is only one thing which can be universally adopted in India and be yet paying so as to supplement the slender resources of the peasantry and even find enough to keep body and soul together for the starving millions. The wheel is the one thing which can replace the degrading doles from the rich people for the famine-stricken, and let them feel sure that they need not starve so long as they are prepared to spin.

Young India, 2-10-1924

141. "*ADHARMA*" FOR DHARMA

A brother asks:

If someone indulges in gambling for the sake of Malabar Relief and offers his takings to the Malabar people, would this gambling be proper or improper? Will you accept or refuse that money?

Gambling is wholly despicable. If relief work cannot be paid for without gambling, let millions die of starvation. *Adharma*[1] can never lead to dharma. I would, therefore, ask everyone to refrain from gambling even for the relief of sufferers in Malabar. The money that is saved by abstaining from gambling may be given to me. This will kill two birds with one stone. You will protect yourself from a vice and the money that might have been wasted over the vice will be utilized for the sake of those who need it. How can a man think of gambling when he is concerned about a calamity? He will rather feed the hungry by starving himself.

The questioner gives a vivid picture of gambling that is going on at Karamala town in Orpad tahsil and says that even boys indulge in it. Occasionally there are altercations. The questioner also seeks a remedy for this evil. The remedy lies in cultivating local public opinion. Public opinion has a miraculous effect on vices. Just as burglars, etc., disappear when it dawns, similarly, when the sun of public opinion rises, vices disappear. If the majority of people at some place are gamblers and only a few are free from the vice, these should warn the townsfolk and if the vice still persists, they should migrate from the town.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 21-9-1924

[1] The opposite of dharma

142. TO THE READER OF "NAVAJIVAN"

By the time .this issue is out, you will have come to know of my atonement. You should not be alarmed on account of my fast. And you must not follow my example. The sinner alone should make atonement. Others should help him. If all Gujarati brothers and sisters assist with body, mind and money in fulfilling the tasks that we have undertaken, we shall see God as well as attain freedom.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 21-9-1924

143. TEST OF FAITH

> I feared that the suggestion to abandon boycott would have the effect of disheartening the weaker sections of the schools. It looks as if I was right. Many teachers have started asking whether the national schools will not now be converted into government schools.

I have reproduced this extract from a letter. In the first place, I have not at all used the word "abandoning". I have suggested suspending the boycott. Secondly, the present national schools which are running without Government affiliation should be continued and, if we have the capacity, new national schools may be opened. Thirdly, suspension does not mean that those who have spontaneous faith in boycott should give it up.

My suggestion simply means that those who have undertaken boycott as a matter of Congress discipline, and not out of spontaneous faith, are absolved from the binding for one year. And those who on account of the boycott have kept out of the Congress may join it at least for a year and engage themselves in essential work universally approved and educate the people.

My suggestion provides a test for the public and for individuals. If after an experience of four years it is clear that the number of those who have spontaneous faith in boycott is negligible, then the Congress cannot authorize boycott. The Congress can only reflect the wishes of the people, right or wrong, and that alone will entitle it to be called a national organization. That which commands the spontaneous faith of a large section

can alone deserve to be called the Congress policy and should be implemented as such. The number of those who abide by a particular policy because it has been adopted by the Congress should always be small. The Congress cannot be run with the help of such people. The Congress is like a prop for them; they can bring no strength to it. Persons with spontaneous faith can alone be the backbone of the Congress. If the reader undertakes a survey of organizations functioning in the world, he will discover that every living organization fulfils this condition. The reason is obvious. An organization has no soul. It has no independent existence of its own. The organizers are its soul. From them it derives its strength. The soul of a prohibition council is its crusading members unwaveringly abstaining from liquor. A council cannot be expected to strengthen the abstention of members. Assuming, however, that they do not get enough members for the council and they have to wind it up, would they start drinking? Or would they persevere with their efforts by choosing another region for propagating abstention to the public?

The plain meaning of my suggestion is that we have no desire to implement boycott by compulsion. Compulsion means violence. Although our movement entirely eschews force, our minds and our actions harbour force. The present bitterness between Hindus and Muslims is positive evidence of this fact. The estrangement between Swarajists and No-changers is further evidence of the same thing. A freedom-fighter's first task is to eliminate this force. Just as I define compulsion as violence, freedom is non-violence. We are afraid of the word non-violence. We all claim to be lovers of freedom. But we are indifferent to non-violence or love, which is the source of freedom. I have noted this fault in us, recognized my duty in the matter and am trying to explain the issues to the advocates of boycott. If a majority of members of the Congress do not approve of boycott spontaneously, it would be violence for advocates of boycott to retain control of the Congress.

But whether the advocates of boycott retain control of the Congress or boycott is suspended in the Congress, in either case it can never mean that those who have spontaneous faith in boycott should give it up. In fact, it is by suspending boycott that we have to ascertain the number of real advocates of boycott. If only a few such advocates are left at the end of the year, I shall take it as proof of the advisability of withdrawal of boycott by the Congress. If, at the end of the year, all those who regard themselves as advocates of boycott adhere to their views in

thought and action, the Congress may reintroduce boycott next year. This revival of boycott will have one feature, namely, the sting of compulsion will have been removed from it. If it produces no effect by the end of the year and there is no change in the Government's attitude, then the advocates of boycott, instead of attempting to revive it in the Congress, should attract others to it by their patient and persistent practice. Voluntary and peaceful boycott is no joke. It cannot last long if it is practised for fear of being disgraced in public. An impulsive boycott is as momentary as the effervescence of soda-water. Only that boycott which is practised deliberately and purposefully can overcome all obstacles and remain steadfast. Therefore I expect No-changers not only to continue their boycott but to enforce it more rigorously even if the Congress suspends it. I can expect nothing else from Gujarat. While we ourselves persist thus in our boycott, if we take to heart the lesson of not deriding our co-workers it will be a mark of our invaluable progress and a great step forward on our march to freedom.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 21-9-1924

144. LETTER TO HARNAM SINGH

C/o "COMRADE" OFFICE,
DELHI,
September 21, 1924

DEAR RAJA SAHIB,

Pray accept my respectful condolence on your great sorrow. May Lady Harnam Singh's soul rest in peace.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

RAJA SIR S. HARNAM SINGH
'THE MANOR'
SIMLA

From a copy: C.W. 3711. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur

145. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

C/o MAULANA MAHOMED ALI,
DELHI,
September 21, 1924

BHAI SAHIB,

You all must have been unhappy on account of my fast. But what could I do? I was helpless. I had no other remedy at all except crying before God. What could I do in such circumstances? God will spare me if He wishes. I long just now to hear Rehana's *bhajans*. I hope your Kheda is busy spinning.

Bhur-r-r-r

For ever your brother,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9549

146. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

DELHI,
Bhadarva Vad 8 [September 21, 1924][1]

CHI. DEVDAS,

Ba[2], Ramdas and others have come. Jamnabehn and Yashwantprasad too have come. Looked through *Navajivan*. I liked it very much. The make-up, the use of bold type, etc., is very nice. Your translation of my message[3] is really wonderful. I could find nothing to correct. By reading "hopelessness"[4] as "helplessness"[5] you have, as it were, proved your title to be my heir. May God give you long life and may He advance your beautiful character and proficiency. I am quite happy. I do not yet feel the fast.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2133

[1] From the reference to the fast
[2] Kasturba Gandhi
[3] *Vide* "Statement Announcing 21-day Fast", 18-9-1924.
[4] & [5] The two words are written in English in the source; *vide* also "Note", 21-9-1924.

147. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Bhadarva Vad 8, [*September 21, 1924*][1]

PUJYA GANGABEHN,

Please do not worry. You are wise. When I am fasting for the sake of dharma, I want you all to rejoice at it. God will spare me if He wants to take some more service from me. You too should have faith in Him.

Keep busy with your study. Be a mother to all the children. This is not beyond your capacity.

May God grant you strength so that your widowhood may prove a blessing to the world.

Blessings from
BAPU

PUJYA GANGABEHN
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6197. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

148. LETTER TO TULSI MEHAR

DELHI,
[*September 21, 1924*][2]

CHI. TULSI MEHAR,

It was only yesterday I had decided to address the Ashram letter to you and I have your letter today. To you and all the other inmates of the Ashram my only appeal is: Follow truth and non-violence; hate no creature in the world; card, spin, and weave for the sake of the starving millions of India and propagate the same. Learn to read and write by all means. Cultivate soul-force. Give the first place to the charkha among village industries.

[1] & [2] From the postmark

I am quite happy. Let no one have the slightest worry on my account.

Blessings from
BAPU

TULSI MEHAR
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6520

149. ALL ABOUT THE FAST

September 22, 1924

I wish to assure the reader that the fast has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact my life has been a stake ever since the birth of non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it. No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot therefore detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether therefore I will or no, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

I knew that non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural, vicious and sinful. But non-violent non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of mistake in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scales.

The fact that Hindus and Mussalmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting

like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptoms in Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases. I did penance then. It had its effect *pro tanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive. I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding. Empty prayer is "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal". I little knew then that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast. And yet I know that the fast is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul. Have I erred, have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil? I may have done all these things or none of them. All I know is what I see before me. If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible. My responsibility is clearly somewhere.

I was violently shaken by Amethi, Shambhar and Gulbarga. I had read the reports about Amethi and Shambhar prepared by Hindu and Mussalman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Mussalman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wednesday I knew the remedy. I must do penance. In the Satyagraha Ashram at the time of morning prayer we ask Siva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed.

It is a warning to the Hindus and Mussalmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God. The world is watching—some with glee and some with sorrow—the dogfight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion—call it by what you like—

is made of sterner stuff. The penance of Hindus and Mussalmans is not fasting but retracing their steps. It is true penance for a Mussalman to harbour no ill for his Hindu brother and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussalman brother.

I ask of no Hindu or Mussalman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussalman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself.

I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Sahib who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday—not Maulana Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it, he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends would deem it their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve either by the weepings and wailings of his dear mother or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even the certainty of his father's death if he carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have been much of a religion, if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussalman roof? Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill will against a single soul. My being under a Mussalman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussalman house.

And who is Mahomed Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him, what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rahman have constituted them-

selves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

It has been whispered that by being so much with Mussalman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not need to live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very poor thing, if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussalman mind. The closer I come to the best of Mussalmans, the juster I am likely to be in my estimate of the Mussalmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussalmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so. My fast is among other things meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love.

Young India, 25-9-1924

150. NOTE

September 22, 1924

Notice to Readers

Young India and *Navajivan* are my delight. I love to write weekly to the public through this medium. But I am sorry to say that for two or three weeks I must suspend the editorial responsibility. My medical tyrants forbid it. Charlie Andrews insists on editing *Young India* himself during the period of purification and convalescence. I gladly accept the offer. We are as blood-brothers. And the reader will be glad to have the same message rendered in a chaster and purer style. English is after all a foreign tongue for me. Charlie Andrews is master of it. It can therefore only give me pleasure to surrender editorial control of *Young India* to him. Mahadev Desai will be responsible for the editorship of *Navajivan*. Among the Gujaratis I have no more faithful interpreter of my message than he. This does not mean that I shall write nothing for the pages of *Young India* or *Navajivan*. If

my strength keeps up—and it is highly likely—to the end and if the doctors allow, I hope to contribute a few paragraphs to each.

Young India, 25-9-1924

151. TELEGRAM TO S. SRINIVASA IYENGAR[1]

[*September 22, 1924*][2]

THANKS. CANCELLATION WOULD AMOUNT TO CANCELLATION DEEPEST CONVICTIONS. WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO THAT? PRAY DO NOT WORRY.

The Hindu, 22-9-1924

152. LETTER TO SARALADEVI CHOWDHARANI

DELHI,
September 22, 1924

I have your pathetic appeal. I do want to live. I was imposing on myself 40 days. But on deeper scrutiny I saw I must impose the minimum consistent with the situation. If God wants more service through this body He will surely spare it.

The Tribune, 27-9-1924

153. NO WORK, NO VOTE

September 23, 1924

Maulana Hasrat Mohani brought me the other day the constitution of the Russian Soviet, and told me that I should read it, if only to find a striking resemblance between the Soviet constitution and that of the Congress. I have cursorily read that constitution, and whilst there is undoubtedly a striking resemblance in form between the two constitutions, showing that there is nothing new or original under the sun, there are also vital differences into which I need not go. But the one thing that captivated me was the formula of "no work, no vote". The qualification under the Soviet constitution is not money, not even four

[1] 1874-1941; lawyer and Congress leader of Madras; presided over the Gauhati session of the Congress, 1926; elected to Central Assembly, 1926

[2] Released on this date by the Associated Press of India from Madras

annas, not landed property, not even education, but *honest labour.* Thus the Soviet Congress is a workers' Congress. The philosophers, the professors, and all others must do some labour. What form that labour takes, I do not know. As I gave it only a few minutes, even if the information is to be found in the booklet, it has escaped me. The important and relevant fact is that every voter has to show sound work. My proposal therefore that everyone henceforth who desires to belong to the Congress organization should have some labour for the nation to his credit is neither original nor ridiculous. Seeing that a great nation has accepted before us the formula, we need not be ashamed of copying it. Labour given for only a few minutes per day to be fruitful must be of the same kind for the millions. And there is nothing but hand-spinning which can be made universal in a big country like ours.

But it has been urged that my proposal is not a mere labour proposal; it surreptitiously raises the pecuniary qualification. No matter how fine the yarn may be, the quantity for the year can never be brought down so low as to cost four annas. But the critics forget, that I have said in the article in which I sketched the proposal, that those who cannot afford[1] cotton should have it given to them by the Provincial Congress Committees, so that the free gift of cotton would be under my plan a donation, not a subscription. Experience shows that it is perfectly possible for thousands to find sufficient cotton to spin 24,000 yards per year. The total of those who have sent their yarn to the All-India Khaddar Board is nearly five thousand. They have not asked for cotton from the Khaddar Board. It is possible that some provinces have made arrangements for supplying spinners with cotton. If they have done so, there is nothing improper about it. For the chief thing is the labour for half an hour. The nation is not dying for want of raw products, but it *is* dying for want of labour and minimum skill. My proposal seems to jar, because we have not been used to toil with our hands and find it difficult to appreciate the possibilities of a whole nation voluntarily giving half an hour's labour to a single national necessity. Surely there is nothing immoral about my proposal. There is nothing in it that can come to conflict with anybody's conscience. There is nothing Herculean about it. Indeed, half an hour's easy labour is too insignificant to become exacting for the most industrious worker. The most, therefore, that can be urged against the

[1] The source has "give". But *vide* "The Realities", 11-9-1924, p. 123.

proposal is that the labour will be fruitless. Assume for one moment that it will be fruitless in terms of swaraj or immediate economic solution. But surely it is not fruitless if cheap khaddar can be brought out from the maunds of yarn received by the All-India Khaddar Board from month to month. A single yard of cloth added to the national production cannot be called a fruitless effort.

Another objection that has been advanced against the proposal is that it will disfranchise thousands of Congress voters. I make bold to say that the objection is chimerical. A voter is one who actively interests himself in the organization in which he is a voter. Our voters are not of that type. The fault is not theirs, but ours. We have not interested ourselves sufficiently in them. And we are not going to do so without being spurred thereto. The spindle is the spur. From month to month Congress officials will have to keep themselves in direct touch with every single voter. It surprises me that it should be necessary to demonstrate the obvious. Think of the possibilities of an organization of honest workers who must render an account of their work from month to month. Surely, a living organization containing a few earnest workers is infinitely superior to an organization containing many indifferent members whose work is confined merely to registering their votes at the bidding of a few men. The indications, however, are that if only we would have the courage to make the necessary change, we will have a very large number of voters, much larger than many expect. The number of the second month is double the number of the first month. If every worker in every province properly organizes this voluntary spinning, we must have a steady increase in the spinners. We should not be surprised to find the figure of two lakhs being reached in a few months. Two lakhs means ten thousand for each province. It does not need extraordinary organizing ability to register ten thousand voluntary spinners in each province on an average. I hope, therefore, that my proposal will not be rejected.

I have purposely called my proposal the lowest common measure, not the highest. And the lowest does not mean the lowest acceptable to the whole of India, but the lowest necessary for the national achievement. And I hold that, if we are to achieve swaraj by bloodless methods, the three things mentioned by me are absolutely necessary. If the ideal is to have as many voters as we can, irrespective of efficiency, then Hindu-Muslim unity and [anti-]untouchability also must go by the board. For I know that our intense work about untouchability has driven away

many men from the Congress. They still hug it as an integral part of Hinduism. The same may be said of Hindu-Muslim unity. For recent experiences have shown that there are many who not only do not want Hindu-Muslim unity, but want to perpetuate our differences. They want to pick quarrels on the slightest pretext. They do not hesitate to manufacture pretexts. If, therefore, we dispense with all conditions conducive to internal growth, we will have a Congress of rabble, not a Congress that would respond as one man to the call of the nation. I for one would absolutely freeze in an organization in which the three things mentioned by me were not living realities. To paraphrase a Biblical verse, if it is no profanation, I would say: "Seek you first Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and the spinning-wheel and khaddar, and everything will be added unto you."

Young India, 25-9-1924

154. TELEGRAM TO M. R. JAYAKAR[1]

[*September 23, 1924*][2]

I AM NOT A LITERALIST OF THE SPIRIT OF OUR SHASTRAS. I HOLD THAT PENANCE IS JUSTIFIED. PRAY HAVE NO ANXIETY ABOUT ME. KEEPING PERFECT HEALTH.

The Story of My Life, Vol. II, pp. 453-4

155. TELEGRAM TO KUMBAKONAM CONGRESS COMMITTEE

[*September 23, 1924*][3]

THANKS WIRE. GOD WILLING SHALL SURVIVE ORDEAL.

GANDHI

The Hindu, 23-9-1924

[1] In reply to his enquiries about Gandhiji's health

[2] Received by the addressee on this date

[3] From the date of reporting

156. LETTER TO SATISH CHANDRA MUKERJEE

DELHI,
September 23, 1924

DEAR SATISH BABU,

This is just to tell you that I am taking the fast extraordinarily well. I know you are inwardly rejoicing that God has given me the strength to go through the ordeal. If you at all feel like coming, do come during the last week of the fast. You will no more worry about Kristodas.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

Kristodas just informs me you are having fever. In that case you must not travel.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: G.N. 5596

157. TO THE READER

DELHI,
Wednesday, Bhadarva Vad 11 [*September 24, 1924*]

What should I write to you? The relationship between you and me is, I think, unusual. It is not for money or fame that I have taken up the editorship of *Navajivan*. I have taken it up in order to enter your heart with my words. The editorship came my way unsought; but ever since I have been thinking of you. Every week I endeavour to put my soul into *Navajivan*. I do not write even one word there without God as witness. I have not considered it my duty to place before you only such offerings as would please you. I have often offered bitter doses. Through every dose, whether bitter or sweet, I have sought to define my ideas of plain duty and pure patriotism.

The fast which I am undergoing now is for making me more fit for the editorship. I know that many readers of *Navajivan* are guided by my writings. I may perhaps have done them some harm by wrong guidance. This thought used to torture me.

I had not the least doubt regarding untouchability. There was no room for doubt regarding the spinning-wheel either. The wheel is like crutches to the lame. It is the means of satisfying the hunger of the starving. To a poor woman, it is a fortress for protecting her virtue. I am convinced that it would be impossible to ward off starvation from India without a general acceptance of the spinning-wheel. Therefore there is no chance of error in plying or propagating the spinning-wheel.

There is also no room for doubt about the need for Hindu-Muslim unity. Swaraj is inconceivable without it.

But I had always my doubts whether you were prepared to comprehend absolute non-violence. I have repeatedly and loudly proclaimed that tolerance and non-violence are the qualities of the brave. Those who have the strength to kill can alone refrain from killing. Might not my writings lead you to regard cowardice as non-violence? Might it not be that you abandon the duty of defending yourself? That would stand to my discredit. I have said very often in speech and writing that cowardice can never be considered a virtue. The sword indeed has a place in this world; but not cowardice. It is likely that the coward would perish and that is but fair. What I am trying to prove is that even he who takes a sword is likely to perish. The man with a sword, whom does he protect and whom does he kill? Physical strength stands no comparison before spiritual strength. Non-violence reveals the strength of spirit, while the sword that of the body. With the use of the sword, spirit degenerates into matter. By resorting to non-violence, the soul recovers its spiritual nature. One who does not understand this truth must protect his wards by using the sword if necessary.

I cannot explain with words the priceless virtue of non-violence. It can be taught only through practice. That is why I am practising this virtue at the moment. I would not touch with a sword even those Muslims who destroy our temples; I would not hate them; I would win them over only with love.

I have written that even if one true *premi*[1] is born in India, he would be able to protect his religion. I wish to become such a one. I always write to persuade you too to do likewise.

I know that I am filled with overflowing love. But is there any limit to love? I know that my love is not limitless. Can I play with a serpent? I have a firm belief that even a serpent would be at peace in the presenc of an incarnation of non-violence.

[1] A loving person

I am examining myself by fasting; I am gathering more love. While I do my duty, I wish to make you aware of yours. Nothing would be gained by your fasting with me. For fasting too there is a time and a title. Your duty is to fulfil the threefold programme which I have placed before you in various ways. I am confident that you will draw many other corollaries from that programme.

Instead of doubting the propriety of my fast or lamenting over it, you should pray to God that it may proceed smoothly, that I may resume my service to you through *Navajivan* and that my words may acquire a new power.

Your servant,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 28-9-1924

158. LETTER TO SARALADEVI CHOWDHARANI

DELHI,
September 24, 1924

My penance is not vicarious. It is for the possible mistake I might have committed. . . . Why do you suppose that I have drawn inspiration from Christian examples? I should not be ashamed, only this has nothing to do with it.

The Tribune, 27-9-1924

159. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON UNITY CONFERENCE[1]

DELHI,
September 24, 1924

It is a matter of great regret to me that I shall not be able to attend the coming Conference. I am aware that my fast is itself a disturbing factor. My presence will be still more so, but though I must not be present in body my spirit will be there.

My fast has brought the Conference together. I should be glad if it tends to induce heart-searching and makes us all frank, fearless and truthful, if it enables us to forgo the non-essentials

[1] Which began its session at Delhi on September 26, 1924

and confines us strictly to the essentials, but I should be deeply hurt if it makes a single Hindu or Mussalman surrender a tittle of what he may regard as his principle. The Conference will be fruitless if it produces a patched-up peace. It will fail in its effect. What is wanted is a heart-unity and that can only come if heart speaks to heart. If Mussalmans consider that desecration of temples is a duty, that a man who honestly gives up Islam or a man who having embraced it changes to another faith deserves punishment at their hands, or if they consider that music before mosques must be forcibly stopped, they should declare it. I shall honour them for it. But I shall know that then there is no peace for this unhappy land. I would far rather face the consequence than have a single Mussalman suppress his religious conviction under outside pressure.

As a Hindu I know that a Hindu dare not say that his religion compels him to desecrate mosques or force a Mussalman to stop the slaughter of cows. I know that he commits a grievous sin if he does any of these acts. But if there are Hindus who regard the desecration of other peoples' places of worship or the forcible stopping of cow-slaughter a duty let them say so. I shall know then that again there is no peace in this land of tears and sorrow.

All I wish to emphasize is that there should be no mental reservations because of the fast and that a false truce will only aggravate my agony, and my next state will be worse than the present. The fast should therefore be ruled out of our deliberations but if the members consider that it is impossible to do so I would urge the postponement of the Conference till the weight of the fast is lifted.

The Hindu, 25-9-1924

160. NOTES

Loss of a Comrade

We in India know nothing of our South African heroes. They are unknown to fame like

> Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
> The little tyrant of his fields withstood.

I have just received a cable from Johannesburg announcing the death of P. K. Naidu from pneumonia. He was one of the truest of Indians and the stoutest of hearts. He suffered the hardships of a prison-life many times. His wife followed suit. He

was ready for all work. He got ready on an hour's notice to take charge of a party of deportees who were banished by General Smuts to India. He counted no cost too dear for the sake of his country's freedom. His death at the present moment, for our countrymen in South Africa, is a tremendous loss. He was capable single-handed of hurling defiance against the mighty South African Government. Indeed only a few weeks ago I had a letter from him describing his plan of campaign. Alas! cruel Nature had planned otherwise. Naidu is dead; his work will live for ever. Mr. P. K. Naidu was a fair English scholar. He knew Hindi, Telugu, French and Zulu. He was self-taught. He had a powerful build. He was no mean pugilist. But he had learnt the secret of non-violence. He was therefore able to control himself under the gravest provocation. He was a born toiler. He never refused any work. He was an expert barber and, because he would not become a clerk, he had chosen to be a barber and carried on a hair-cutting saloon. When, at Tolstoy Farm, we took to sandal making, he became a finished sandal-maker. He was a true soldier. He knew how to obey. I tender my humble condolences to Mrs. Naidu and our countrymen in South Africa.

Inhuman Treatment

I had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Gangabai Gidwani[1] and Dr. Choithram[2] after their visit to Acharya Gidwani. They tell me that Acharya Gidwani is kept confined the whole day long and is permitted to receive visitors only once every three months and that he must have lost over thirty pounds in weight. They tell me too that the Acharya has not been weighed by the authorities for a long time and, when they asked the Superintendent why no weight was taken for a long time, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "That is not the system here." I know that jails are not palaces, that prisoners must not expect to have all the facilities of home life. But I do know many jails where the treatment meted out to Acharya Gidwani would be impossible. I must say in fairness to the authorities that the Acharya has been offered half an hour's exercise in the open in the morning and in the evenning. But he has rejected the offer with scorn. I am not surprised. He is a proud, self-respecting man. He is conscious of no wrong. He did not even wilfully cross the Nabha border. His humanity pushed him in. He has never been known to have done

[1] Wife of A. T. Gidwani

[2] Dr. Choithram Gidwani, Sind Congress leader

anything that could be considered ungentlemanly. He has not schemed against the Nabha State. He has not been suspected of violent designs. Why then should he not be treated as an ordinary prisoner who is kept out in the open air practically the whole day long? Even murderers have plenty of fresh air and exercise allowed to them. The brutal solitary confinement imposed upon Acharya Gidwani is, so far as I am aware, without any cause. Such confinement is imposed as a punishment for serious prison offences. If Acharya Gidwani has committed any, the public should be informed of it. It may be that the Nabha State has no facility for keeping the Acharya outdoor the whole day long. If so, I would suggest his transfer to another prison. I know that there is an exchange system throughout Indian jails. For instance I saw in the Yeravda Central Prison prisoners from the Punjab, from the State of Junagadh, from the Presidency of Madras. When I heard the statement of Mrs. Gidwani and Dr. Choithram the whole of the civil resister rose in me and I felt like giving battle. But I realized my powerlessness and hung my head in shame. With an India cut up into warring parties and torn with Hindu-Muslim squabbles, civil resistance seems to be an impossibility. Pandit Jawaharlal asks me whether in the face of the letter received from the Administrator of Nabha he should not take up the challenge and cross the border and join his mate. I wish I could have said 'yes' to him. One's only comfort is that Acharya Gidwani is a brave man and well able to undergo all the suffering he may be subjected to. May God give him strength to go through the fire! It is the price we must pay for liberty. Liberty is a dearly bought commodity and prisons are factories where it is manufactured.

Young India, 25-9-1924

161. TELEGRAM TO G. D. BIRLA

DELHI,
September 25, 1924

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA
137, CANNING STREET
CALCUTTA

KNEW YOU WOULD APPROVE RELIGIOUS NECESSITY FAST. HOPE YOU WILL GET WELL SOON. NEED NOT COME JUST NOW. AFTER YOU ARE RESTORED HEALTH WOULD LIKE YOU COME.

GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 5997. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

162. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

[*September 26, 1924*][1]

CHI. MANI,

Do not get nervous on account of my fast. Considering the period of the fast that has passed I am still maintaining my strength. I believe the twenty-one days will pass without any difficulty. Doctors too hold the same view. Take good care of your health. Keep up the practice of taking long walks. Write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN PATEL
C/o BARRISTER VALLABHBHAI
AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro 4—Manibehn Patelne, p. 20

[1] As in the source

163. DRAFT RESOLUTION ON HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY[1]

[Before *September 27, 1924*]

This Conference deplores the dissensions and quarrels that are now going on between Hindus and Mussalmans in several places in India resulting in loss of life, burning[2] of property, and desecration of temples. The Conference regards them as barbarous and contrary to religion. The Conference[3] tenders its warm sympathy to the sufferers. This Conference is of opinion that it is unlawful and irreligious for any person to take the law into his own hands.[4] The Conference is of opinion that all differences, no matter of what nature so ever[5], should be referred to arbitration or[6] to a court of law. This Conference hereby appoints ... (should be such men as would give their whole time) to work as arbitrators with power to appoint agents to decide all disputes between the two communities, to inquire into past wrongs and to publish their findings.

This Conference is of opinion that Hindus must not expect the stopping of cow-slaughter by force, but must trust to the good sense of Mussalmans and better relations between the two communities to respect their feelings and similarly Mussalmans must not expect by force to stop Hindu music near mosques, but must rely upon the good sense of Hindus as far as possible to respect their feeling where it is genuine.

This Conference is of opinion that a section of the Press specially in the North is responsible for increasing the tension by putting wild exaggerations reviling each other's religion and by every means fomenting prejudices and passion. This Conference appeals to the public to stop patronage of such newspapers and pamphlets and advises the Board mentioned in the resolution to scrutinize[7] such writings and from time to time publish correct versions.

[1] Presumably drafted by Gandhiji. The resolution, with a few alterations as indicated in footnotes below, is reported in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29-9-1924, as a resolution moved by Shaukat Ali and passed in the Subjects Committee of the Unity Conference on September 27, 1924.

[2] In the resolution as passed "and plunder" is added here.

[3] "Contrary to religion. The Conference" is omitted.

[4] "By way of retaliation or punishment" is added here.

[5] "So ever" is omitted.

[6] "If that be impossible even" is added here.

[7] The source has "supervise".

This Conference authorizes the Board appointed under the resolution to frame a scheme for the protection of rights of minorities and to that end shall invite representations from all parties and all sections and publish its finding to be binding on all parties for a period of five years ending 1929, and then until revised by a joint conference representing all interests.

This Conference is of opinion that *tabligh* or *shuddhi* of minors or adults without education and clear understanding is contrary to the moral sense and should be abandoned. This Conference is further of opinion that *tabligh* or *shuddhi* by material inducements is reprehensible and should be abandoned wherever practised. This Conference is further of opinion that *tabligh* or *shuddhi* should never be in secret and every conversion must be open and after notice to the relations of the parties concerned.

From a photostat: S.N. 15870

164. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

September 27, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

Moved by affection and pity the Conference guided by you has passed the resolution[1] you kindly read to me last night. I would ask you to assure the meeting that if I could have complied with its wishes I would gladly have done so. But I have

[1] This Conference places on record its deep grief and concern at the fast which Mahatma Gandhi has undertaken.

The Conference is emphatically of opinion that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion is essential, and condemns any desecration of places of worship, to whatsoever faith they may belong, and any persecution or punishment of any person for adopting or reverting to any faith; and further condemns any attempts by compulsion to convert people to one's faith or to secure or enforce one's own religious observations at the cost of the rights of others.

The members of the Conference assure Mahatma Gandhi and pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce these principles and to condemn any deviation from them even under provocation.

This Conference further authorizes the President to convey personally to Mahatma Gandhi the solemn assurance of this Conference to the above effect as also the united wishes of this Conference that Mahatma Gandhi should immediately break his fast in order to permit the Conference to have the benefit of his co-operation, advice and guidance in deciding upon the speediest means of effectively checking the evil which is fast over-spreading the country.

examined and re-examined myself and I find it is not possible for me to recall the fast. My religion teaches me that a promise once made or a vow once taken for a worthy object may not be broken. And you know my life has been regulated on that basis for now more than 40 years.

The causes of the fast are much deeper than I can explain in this note. For one thing, I am expressing my faith through this fast. Non-co-operation was not conceived in hatred or ill will towards a single Englishman. Its non-violent character was intended to conquer Englishmen by our love. Not only has it not resulted in that consequence, but the energy generated by it has brought about hatred and ill will against one another amongst ourselves. It is the knowledge of this fact which has weighed me down and imposed this irrevocable penance upon me.

The fast is therefore a matter between God and myself, and I would therefore not only ask you to forgive me for not breaking it but would ask you even to encourage me and pray for me that it may end successfully.

I have not taken up the fast to die, but I have taken it up to live a better and purer life for the service of the country. If, therefore, I reach a crisis (of which humanly speaking I see no possibility whatsoever) when the choice lies between death and food, I shall certainly break the fast.[1] But Drs. Ansari and Abdul Rahman, who are looking after me with the greatest attention and care, will tell you that I am keeping wonderfully fresh.

I would therefore respectfully urge the meeting to transmute all personal affection of which the resolution is an index into solid, earnest and true work for unity for which the Conference has met.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 2-10-1924

[1] In *Bapuni Prasadi* (p. 77) this and the preceding sentence appear as a "Note to Mathuradas Trikumji" in reply to his letter to Mahadev Desai concerning Gandhiji's fast.

165. LETTER TO NARAHARI PARIKH

Bhadarva Vad 30 [September 28, 1924][1]

BHAI NARAHARI,

I did not write to you as Mahadev does so every day. But I think all the time of you and Jugatram. You will see from my handwriting that the fast has not had much effect on me. I am quite calm and happy. Please do not worry about me Convey my *Vandemataram* to all brothers and sisters there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9046

166. CHANGE OF HEART

September 29, 1924

Hitherto it has been a struggle and a yearning for a change of heart among Englishmen who compose the Government of India. That change has still to come. But the struggle must for the moment be transferred to a change of heart among the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Before they dare think of freedom they must be brave enough to love one another, to tolerate one another's religion, even prejudices and superstitions and to trust one another. This requires faith in oneself. And faith in oneself is faith in God. If we have that faith we shall cease to fear one another.

Young India, 2-10-1924

[1] From the reference to the fast

167. LETTER TO MRS. HODGKINSON

[*September 30, 1924*][1]

DEAR MRS. HODGKINSON,

I thank you for your letter. I am daily praying to God to guide me. It was after prayer that I began the fast. I have taken it up not to die but to live a better and purer man for service; but if God wills otherwise who can help? I quite agree with you that unity cannot be achieved by human effort in one day, but faith and prayer can work miracles.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Tribune, 3-10-1924

168. MESSAGE TO "GUNASUNDARI"[2]

The cord of swaraj is in the hands of women. At present they have lost hold of it. If they spin strong and beautiful yarn they would be able with its help to draw swaraj from wherever it may be.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Gunasundari, October 1924

169. MESSAGE ON ANNIE BESANT'S BIRTHDAY[3]

[Before *October 1, 1924*]

It grieves me that I cannot be present at the celebration of Dr. Besant's birthday. I was looking forward to the privilege of presiding at a Bombay meeting; but what are man's resolutions

[1] Received by the addressee on this date

[2] A Gujarati monthly

[3] This was read out at a meeting held at Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall, Bombay, on October 1, under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial Congress, Swarajya Sabha and other public bodies, to celebrate the 78th birthday and the jubilee of her public life. M. A. Jinnah presided and Annie Besant was present. *Vide* also "Letter to Annie Besant, 18-9-1924.

before God's dispositions? I had no notion that I would have to undertake the penance that God has imposed on me. I hope that the meeting will forgive me. But although I shall not be present in body, I shall be present in spirit. Dr. Besant is a world figure. It is no small gain to India that she has adopted Bharat Mata as her mother and dedicated all her matchless gifts to her services. At her time of life, when people should be entitled to complete rest from all toil, she, with amazing energy, is writing, making speeches, moving about, and hatching plans for India's deliverance. Her indomitable courage in the face of all odds, her great organizing power, her literary and oratorical gifts, and many other qualities that I could name are all treasures for us to prize and to utilize. It was painful to me, therefore, to differ from her. It is an equal pleasure to me that we seem to be coming closer. May God give her long life and enable her to witness the establishment of swaraj, for which she and we are all striving, and for the achievement of which she is not to be surpassed by any body in perseverance and ceaseless efforts.

New India, 2-10-1924

170. REPLY TO BOMBAY WOMEN'S DEPUTATION

October 1, 1924

A Bombay ladies' deputation consisting of Mrs. Captain, the secretary of the Rashtriya Stri Sabha, Mrs. Mir Ali, Mrs. Gokhale, Mrs. Thakur and Miss Petit waited on Mahatma Gandhi yesterday and requested him to break fast.

Mahatmaji in reply said that he had determined to continue the fast to the end and he was sure that he would finish it without interruption.

The Hindustan Times, 2-10-1924

171. WILL GUJARAT ACCEPT DEFEAT?

Wednesday, Aso Sud 3 [October 1, 1924]

Andhradesh and Bengal have threatened to surpass Gujarat in respect of the number of spinners. If either province surpasses Gujarat, I shall, of course, congratulate it; but why should Gujarat be defeated? One achieves success even if one is surpassed after making one's best effort. Gujarat has just now launched upon its endeavour. Do all the teachers spin? Do the

students spin? Let all of them spin, let all the numberless brothers and sisters who attend public meetings spin—and then it would not matter if Gujarat is left behind. The challenge is for the organizers; let them get busy.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-10-1924

172. MESSAGE TO INTERNATIONAL OPIUM CONFERENCE, GENEVA[1]

[Before *October 2, 1924*]

The following has been signed by Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore:

The undersigned, viewing the growing addiction to narcotic drugs to be a deadly menace to individuals and to nations, and also an insidious, rapidly spreading poisoning of the human race, which can be overcome only by co-operation among nations, respectfully petition the International Opium Conference assembling in November, 1924 to adopt measures adequate for total extirpation of the plants from which these drugs originate, except as found necessary for medicine and science in the judgment of the best medical opinion of the world.

Young India, 2-10-1924

173. TELEGRAM TO BHAI PARMANAND

[*October 2, 1924*][2]

Mr. Gandhi has sent a telegram in reply to Bhai Parmanand's message saying that God alone knew whether he had sinned in taking up the fast, that he was prepared to lay down his life if that would console Kohat refugees and that if the Kohat deputation intended to urge him to abandon the fast it would be useless for them to come to Delhi, but otherwise he would be very pleased to meet them.

New India, 3-10-1924

[1] *New India*, 22-11-1924, carried the following under the date line, "Geneva, November 20": "Mr. Alexander, representing the Society of Friends of Great Britain . . . said . . . that he had received today a telegram from Mr. Gandhi declaring that all India wanted the suppression of the opium traffic except for medicinal purposes."

[2] Released on this date by the Associated Press of India from Ahmedabad

174. NOTE

Why I Have Not Embraced Islam

A Muslim brother writes:

> You claim that you are a lover, a seeker and a follower of truth. You have said besides that Islam is not a false religion. It is the command of *Khuda* that every person should embrace Islam. Why then haven't you embraced Islam? When I drew the attention of a Hindu leader to Supplement No. 14[1], he said that Gandhiji had written it to placate the Muslims and that he had no love for Islam in his heart.

This brother has insistently asked for a reply. It has nowhere been enjoined that everyone should do everything that is not false. Just as I do not consider Islam to be a false religion, so also do I not consider Christianity, Zoroastrianism or Judaism to be false religions. Which religion, then, should I embrace? Moreover, I do not consider Hinduism a false religion either. What, then, should one like me, a seeker of truth, do? I studied the mysteries of Islam and hence declared that it is not a false religion. I thought it necessary to declare it since Islam was under attack, and since I wished to be friends with Muslim brothers, I defended their religion. Everyone feels that his religion is nearest to perfection and hence he is devoted to it. Likewise, not only do I feel that Hinduism is not false but I also feel that it is the most perfect. Hence I cling to my religion, as a child to its mother. But I have no dislike for other religions, as a child has none for other mothers. My love of my religion teaches me to appreciate other people's love for their religions. And I always pray to God that every Hindu and Muslim may learn to do likewise.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-10-1924

[1] Supplement No. 14 to *Navajivan* was published on June 1, 1924, and contained a Gujarati translation of the article, "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure" published in *Young India*, 29-5-1924. *Vide* Vol. XXIV, pp. 136-54.

175. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

Sunday, Aso Sud 7 [October 5, 1924][1]

CHI. JAMNADAS,

Today I have completed the 18th day of my fast but it has not had much effect so far. I am quite happy. You must find out the cause why Meva[2] does not recover from her illness. I hope you are more at ease now and your financial worries at any rate are over. Try to increase the number of voluntary spinners. Utilize Jagannath's services for the work for which he is specially fitted. Convey my respects to Khushalbhai[3] and Devbhabhi[4]. I shall continue to be in Delhi for the present; do therefore write to me here at Mahomed Ali's address.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6036. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

176. MY REFUGE

DELHI,
October 6, 1924

Today is the twentieth day of my penance and prayer. Presently from the world of peace I shall enter the world of strife. The more I think of it the more helpless I feel. So many look to me to finish the work begun by the Unity Conference. So many expect me to bring together the political parties. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. Lord! make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt.

Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God had so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.

During these days of grace, privilege and peace, I have hummed to myself a hymn we often sing at the Satyagraha Ashram. It is so good that I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a free

[1] From the postmark
[2] Addressee's wife
[3] & [4] Addressee's father and mother

rendering of it with the reader. The words of the hymn better express my state than anything else I can write.

Here they are:

My honour, O! God, is in Thy keeping;
Thou art ever my Refuge,
For Thou art Protector of the weak.
It is Thy promise to listen to the wail of sinners;
I am a sinner of old, help me Thou
To cross this ocean of darkness.
It is Thine to remove the sin
And the misery of mankind.
Be gracious to Tulsidas
And make him Thy devotee.[1]

Young India, 9-10-1924

177. LETTER TO N. M. KHARE

Aso Sud 9/10 [*October 7, 1924*][2]

BHAI PANDITJI[3],

I am writing this to you on the last day of my fast. I have gradually come to look upon music as a means of spiritual development. Please try your best to see that all of us sing our *bhajans* with a correct understanding of the sense. Inmates of the Ashram do not yet become one with the songs they recite. Balkrishna's presence here at this time has been of immense help to me. Why should not everybody be like him? All the *bhaktas* [devotees] have lost themselves in their prayers. Rambhau[4] does not sit erect, let him cultivate the habit of sitting erect.

I cannot describe the joy I feel; I did not have to suffer much. God is merciful.

Blessings from
BAPU

PANDITJI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a facsimile of the Gujarati original in *Mahatma*, Vol. II

[1] The original text of the hymn of Tulsidas was reproduced under "Notes" in the same issue of *Young India*.
[2] From the postmark
[3] Music teacher in the Ashram; a member of the Dandi March group
[4] Addressee's son

178. STATEMENT BEFORE BREAKING FAST

DELHI,
October 8, 1924

Mr. Gandhi broke his fast at 12 noon today. . . . After the Hindu, Muslim and Christian prayers were over . . . in a low voice, at times almost inaudible . . . he said:

Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new interest with me. It has been my chief concern for 30 years. But I have not succeeded in achieving it. I do not know what is the will of God. You know how originally my vow consisted of two parts. One of them is fulfilled. Another part I held back in response to the wishes of friends who were present at Mr. Mahomed Ali's house that night. Even if I had retained this second part, my fast would now have been broken in view of the success of the Unity Conference.

Addressing the Mussalmans through Hakim Ajmal Khan and Mr. Mahomed Ali, Mr. Gandhi said:

Today I beseech you to promise that you will, if necessary, lay down your life for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity. For me, Hinduism would be meaningless if that unity is not achieved, and I make bold to say the same thing about Islam. We ought to be able to live together. The Hindus must be able to offer their worship in perfect freedom in their temples, and so should Mussalmans be able to say their *azan* and prayer with equal freedom in their mosques. If we cannot ensure this elemental freedom of worship, then neither Hinduism nor Islam has any meaning. I want this promise from you, and I know I have it; but as I am about to break my fast, I am so weighed down with the sense of responsibility that I am asking you to renew the pledge.

New India, 9-10-1924

179. IMPORTANCE OF "TAPAS"

October 8, 1924

There are instances of *tapas* [penance] at every step in Hindu mythology. Parvati desired to win Shankara and she took to *tapas*. Siva did something wrong and so he undertook *tapas*. Vishwamitra was the very incarnation of *tapas*. When Rama went into exile, Bharata plunged into yoga discipline, practised austere *tapas* and wore out his body.

God cannot test man in any other manner. If the soul is different from the body, it should remain blissful even when the body is tormented. Food is nourishment for the body, whereas knowledge and meditation are sustenance to the soul. Everyone has to realize this for himself as and when occasion arises.

If, however, the *tapas* is not accompanied by faith, devotion and humility, then all that austerity becomes a futile exercise. It also becomes hypocrisy. A devotee of God who enjoys eating his meal is a thousand times better than such an ascetic.

I have not the strength today to narrate the story of my *tapas* but I may state this much that I cannot possibly live without *tapas*. Once again I am destined to plunge into the stormy ocean. Please, God, know that I am humble and protect me.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 12-10-1924

180. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[*October 8, 1924*][1]

GOD'S GRACE FAST OVER. PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni prasadi, p. 78

[1] As given in the source

181. LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI

DELHI,
October 8, 1924

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You are more than a brother to me. I have seen the cow.[1] My bed was lifted to enable me to see her. What love that has prompted the act! May the bond between you twins and me fructify into an indissoluble bond between Hindus and Mussalmans for the good of our respective faiths, for the good of our country and for the good of humanity. Yes, God is great. He can work wonders.

Yours ever,
M. K. GANDHI[2]

The Bombay Chronicle, 11-10-1924

182. MESSAGE TO "THE STATESMAN"

[Before *October 9, 1924*]

Unity above everything else.

M. K. GANDHI

The Hindustan Times, 9-10-1924

183. MESSAGE TO THE PRESS ON FAST[3]

DELHI,
October 9, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi has issued the following message to the Press:

God is indeed great and merciful. I can feel both His greatness and mercifulness. He has brought me successfully through

[1] In his article, "The Conference and After" in *Young India*, 16-10-1924, Mahomed Ali wrote: "I presented to Mahatma Gandhi, when he broke his fast, a cow which I purchased from a butcher, so that he might send it to a *pinjrapole*."

[2] The letter was signed in Urdu.

[3] This was dictated by Gandhiji in response to a request by the Associated Press representative.

the oraeal. Though I have not been permitted to see all the postal and telegraphic messages received, the few I have seen have overwhelmed me. In the abundance of love of which these messages are typical I also see God's mercy. I thank all those loving friends for their messages. I shall expect them also to help in the work that lies before me. It is God's work. I know my responsibility is far greater today than it was three weeks ago. The fast, I am sane enough to know, does not end my work. It only commences and in this I seek the prayer and co-operation of every son and daughter of India.

New India, 9-10-1924

184. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJI

Aso Sud 14 [*October 11, 1924*][1]

BHAI SHANTIKUMAR,

I got the letter, the garland of yarn and the dry fruits sent by you. I am very glad that you have resolved to spin daily. May God give you the strength to stick to your resolution.

My health is improving.

I always remember the love you showed me at Juhu.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 4796. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarji

185. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Ashvina Krishna 2 [*October 14, 1924*][2]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have been getting your letters. I am not alarmed at the happenings at Jubbulpur and other places. I have done what little atonement I could, and am therefore quite at peace. We have no right to the fruit [of our actions]. It rests with God alone. I do intend as soon as I am well to undertake a tour in company with several prominent leaders. First of all, I wish to visit Kohat. I hope to be ready in eight days.

[1] From the reference to Juhu and Gandhiji's health

[2] From the reference to the fast and the contemplated visit to Kohat

When the time comes, I shall ask for all the help you can give.

I am getting plenty of help from your people here.

Kindly send the money either to Jamnalalji or to the Sabarmati Ashram.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6038. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

186. LETTER TO SWAMI SHRADDHANAND

Ashvina Krishna 2 [*October 14, 1924*][1]

BHAI SAHIB,

I have your note. I am trying to make the necessary arrangements for Vykom; I hope help will reach the satyagrahis. I have carefully gone through your statement. I shall keep it with me.

Yours sincerely,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SANNYASI SWAMI SHRI SHRADDHANAND
BURN BASTION ROAD
DELHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2206

187. DUTY OF A NON-CO-OPERATOR

Wednesday, Aso Vad 3 [*October 15, 1924*]

It may be said that non-co-operation will be suspended at the forthcoming Congress session. However, this does not imply that non-co-operators will suspend work. In fact, what was only an illusion of non-co-operation will be suspended. Where there is love, both co-operation and non-co-operation are in fact one and the same thing.

Whether the father and son co-operate or non-co-operate with each other, both the attitudes should be the fruit of love. Co-operation is not worth the name when born out of selfishness;

[1] From the postmark

it is rather a kind of bribe. So also non-co-operation born out of hatred is a grave sin. Both these should be eschewed.

The non-co-operation that was introduced in 1920 was rooted in love; maybe the people were not aware of this and joined it out of hatred. Nevertheless, if all the leaders had understood its true nature and acted in accordance with it, we could have avoided the bitter results that have followed.

We did not understand peaceful non-co-operation. Hence hatred increased, and we have now to suffer the fruit of our own actions. That hatred which inspired our non-co-operation with the British has now raised its head within our own ranks.

That hatred has appeared not only between Hindus and Muslims but also between co-operators and non-co-operators.

Hence in order to prevent such perverted results of non-co-operation, we have to suspend it. This does not mean merely that lawyers who would like to take up their legal practice or students who would like to return to Government schools could do so without a sense of shame. In fact, those lawyers who have grasped the principle of non-co-operation will not resume practice; nor will such students return to Government schools. The suspension of non-co-operation should result in our being repentant, in the non-co-operator embracing the co-operator, winning the latter over through love and bearing no ill will towards him. The latter may take assistance from the Government, be he a Government pleader, a Government servant, or a member of the Legislative Assembly; still the former should make friends and associate with them all and help and be helped by them in resolving disputes between Hindus and Muslims, in removing untouchability, in boycotting foreign cloth, in getting rid of the addiction to liquor and opium and in many such tasks.

It is for the non-co-operator to take the lead in these tasks. In doing so, his tact, discretion, civility, love of peace and humility will be put to the test. It is in winning over the co-operator through love that the quality of the non-co-operator will be tested. False flattery and rudeness should both be avoided. The very first lesson consists in all of us uniting in order to strike the middle path. May God help us.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 19-10-1924

188. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Aso Vad 3 [*October 15, 1924*]

PUJYA GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. I was glad to read it. I want you to stay there without any anxiety and learn everything. If you have any difficulty let me know. I shall reply to you on hearing from you. Please let me know how far you have read. Why did the children go to Bombay?

I am gaining strength every day. I am getting impatient to go there. But I am afraid I shall not be able to go before visiting Kohat.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6097. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

189. DISCUSSION WITH C. F. ANDREWS[1]

DELHI,
[*Wednesday, October 15, 1924*][2]

Early in the morning, after the usual reading of the *Bhagavata* was over, Bapu sent for Mr. Andrews. . . . When he came upstairs he said to Bapu: "I am going to sing for you this morning a hymn, which I am sure you have never heard before. A military officer, in the Bible, goes to Christ and prays for the recovery of a servant of his, who is lying ill at home. Christ offers to go and see the patient Himself. But the officer, considering himself utterly unworthy of so much special attention from the Lord, asks Him merely to express His wish that the patient should survive and he was sure that this would be enough. Such is the story that lies behind this hymn."

With this introduction, Mr. Andrews sang the hymn given below:

[1] This appeared under the caption, "An Interesting Conversation" with the following introductory note by C. F. Andrews: "I am publishing this translation of Mahadev's article, published in *Navajivan*, which has been made for me by Devdas. As the conversation was a very important one, I felt that it should be reproduced in English. I have not made any substantive correction, except to make clear that the Bishop I referred to was the saintly Bishop of Durham, the father of the present Metropolitan."

[2] From *Navajivan*, 19-10-1924

I am not worthy; cold and bare
The lodging of my soul;
How canst thou deign to enter there?
Lord, speak and make me whole.

"How closely it resembles the hymn of Tulsidas you are so fond of!" said Mr. Andrews, when he had finished. Bapu answered, to the agreeable surprise of Mr. Andrews:

I have heard it before, I heard it sung in 1893. I used to meet Christians of all denominations then in South Africa[1] and I distinctly remember having heard the hymn at the Sunday services which I used to attend.

Here he recalled some of his old reminiscences connected with his Christian friends, which I need not give here. This over, Bapu said:

But I called you here for an entirely different reason. I wish you to understand properly the meaning of the Spinning Franchise.

Then there followed a lengthy talk, an account of which I give here as accurately as possible:

BAPU: You did not like my article[2] in the latest issue of *Young India*. But I tell you the argument is irresistible. You disapprove of my article because you omit to take note of the concluding portion, where I make it clear that my appeal is addressed only to those who believe in voluntary spinning as an absolute necessity for the country. They should have no difficulty in accepting the condition of having to spin and contribute 2,000 yards of yarn. When you say you will spin voluntarily, you should have no hesitation in readily joining an institution where the condition of membership is to ply the wheel. That is precisely why I said that in a country such as France, where extreme importance is attached to military training, it would be perfectly legitimate to lay down military training as an indispensable condition of membership in its National Assembly. If today in India we accept the importance of spinning, we ought most naturally to agree to it as a condition of membership in the Congress.

ANDREWS: Your point is very weak. That you should make any comparison with French military training is terrible! I would rather go to jail or be-

[1] *Vide An Autobiography*, Part II, Ch. XI.

[2] *Vide* "The Spinning Franchise", 16-10-1924. Gandhiji seems to have shown this to C. F. Andrews before its publication in *Young India*.

come an exile than join the army, even as Bertrand Russell did, or Romain Rolland, who left his country because he could not reconcile himself to fighting.

Yes, I too would do the same. That matters little. It is but right that conscientious objectors should stand by their principles and suffer the consequences. But if the whole country in general felt the necessity of military training why should there be any objection to giving it a place in the law of the land?

[A:] I don't think you should take the example about military training. You ought to have chosen a better analogy. You could certainly take the instance of the Prohibition Law of the United States. It was only when about 80 per cent of the population of America showed the readiness to abandon drink that the law was enacted. There is nothing to prevent your making about 80 per cent of the Indian population spin through a separate organization of your own and then get spinning adopted as a condition of membership in the National Assembly. As it is, you are placing the cart before the horse.

No. I am perfectly logical. Has an organization got the right to require its members to fulfil certain obligations, or has it not? The thing may or may not appeal to the individual member, but you certainly cannot say that we have not the right to adopt it.

[A:] In America everyone had the right to drink before the Prohibition Law was passed. They have today the right to reintroduce drink by repealing the law. What I want to know is this: Is the Congress the mouthpiece of public opinion, or of the opinion of a small body of men? Will the Congress be a National Assembly, or a small committee?

It will be a National Assembly. You are entitled to say that my experience is wrong. But once you concede that the Congress has the right to impose restrictions on its members, I would be able to convince you easily of the rest.

[A:] You must not make of the Congress a party organization. It should be a voluntary elective body of the nation.

You do not quite realize what Congress is. Today it happens to be an ill-defined and disorganized institution. There is much more in it than is apparent from its constitution. If the Congress is to be a truly democratic organization, its constitution must be more dynamic, more honest. It must more truly fulfil the requirements of the nation. We don't need numbers. When I secured the acceptance of the four-anna-franchise, I had hoped that the Congress would become a mighty assembly, but workers were lacking. Our country today is a country of idlers and dreamers. I refer, not to the dumb millions who are groaning under

poverty and slavery, but to ourselves—the so-called intelligentsia, the talkers. How can I engage all these in some kind of national work except through the spinning-wheel? In what other manner could the Congress be made a practical organization? My hope is that this will come about by the 2,000-yards-a-month spinning idea. As matters stand at present, we have nothing like concerted effort at all. One says, "I shall wield the axe", another wants to sew, yet another would like to devote himself to something else dear to him. This leads to nowhere. I aim at concentrating all the energy and effort on one thing and obtaining substantial results.

[A:] I am afraid you are going to establish a new kind of religion, with spinning and wearing khaddar as its essential factor. Why should I be specially concerned with whether so and so wears khaddar or foreign-made cloth? All I principally care to know is what the man is morally worth. Christ wanted us in judging a person to be guided by his heart and not by his outward appearance.

There is a difference between Christian and Hindu ideals.

[A:] You might as well say that if I ate a particular diet I would gain spiritually. I simply cannot understand that. Take such a saint as the late Bishop Westcott of Durham. He took meat, but it does not follow therefore that he was unspiritual.

Hard cases make bad law. You cannot preach to the generality of people asking them to eat what they like, and yet continue to believe that they are pure.

[A:] But I will come to the original objection. Are we sincerely making serious attempts to prepare the ground, as they did in America before prohibiting drink by law?

I am ever preparing the ground. We are today what we are because of four years' strenuous work. The Congress long ago accepted the importance of spinning. Moreover, the conditions in the two countries are different. America was a "wet" country. There, the people had to be weaned from drinking. They had to do something they never did before. Here, all that is wanted is that the people should revert to an art, which was theirs for ages, but which has been neglected for some time past. That is all. Furthermore . . .

Here he quoted a *sloka* from the *Gita*[1] which literally translated means: "No sincere effort is wasted and there is no ban against sincere effort. The least performance of this duty saves you from calamities."

[1] II, 40

[A:] Why do you say so? There *is* waste in it. We are all fitted for different kinds of work. We may be so preoccupied with other work as not to find even half an hour's time for spinning. I notice Mahadev sitting up even at midnight to do his spinning. I also saw Maulana Mahomed Ali busy spinning even at midnight during the conference and then I wonder to what purpose all this could be.

That these friends have to do their spinning at midnight merely suggests unmethodical habits, and want of the "time sense", that is all.

[A:] Apart from the half an hour imposition, I feel that other things have been thrown into the background since you began to talk of concentration on spinning. So much energy is taken up in khaddar work that the urgent need of checking the drink and drug evils is practically overlooked.

In recommending spinning my sole idea has been to place before the country a programme, which would easily appeal to the common mind and also be a unifying force. It excludes nothing. Picketing of liquor shops was given up because of the fear of violence, not in order to concentrate on khaddar. It is not necessary to lay so much emphasis on the other items of the programme as on khaddar. All agree that drink should be avoided. There is nothing new in this to tell the people. There will be some who will continue to drink even though swaraj is established. These must be tackled after swaraj.

[A:] Is not a strenuous movement for the abolition of the opium traffic immediately called for? The country is convinced that it is.

I believe it.

[A:] Are you aware that women labourers in the mills drug their babies with opium?

Yes, but don't say that the thing has begun to eat into our vitals. Don't imagine that the country will allow it to gain more ground. As for the babies, you have the question of education f the labourers, the question of medical aid, the question of the number of hours for which women labourers should be made to work and numerous other questions connected with their protection.

[A:] When you settled upon the threefold programme of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and khaddar, and left out the question of drink, it struck me as a sad omission.

No, I never forgot it. There is really nothing new to tell the people about it.

[A:] Rather, it has become impossible to get the people to take interest in the opium question.

For the matter of that if you and I stopped writing about South and East Africa nobody would worry about the condition of the Indians there either. We are dealing with people who know nothing. But you must remember that work for the prevention of drink is still going on. Wherever khaddar has gained a footing the whole process of purification has begun. You could realize this if you went to Borsad or to Ramesra or Bardoli. Temperance work and the conditions of social life in the villages mainly occupy the attention of our workers wherever a khaddar centre exists.

[A:] But why make the wearing of khaddar and spinning a *religious* duty? Will not the people boycott those that are daring enough not to wear khaddar or to spin?

Well, it must be a religious duty. Are you sure every Indian will occupy himself usefully in the service of the country, simply if I cease to insist on making spinning a religious duty? Yet that does not at all mean that persons not wearing khaddar or not spinning should be boycotted. On the contrary it would be our duty to embrace them and win them ultimately to the side of khaddar by our love, certainly not by talking or thinking ill of them. I have suffered the penance of a twenty-one days' fast simply because we fell from this standard. Will not the people still understand? True boycott can only be of one kind, that of refusal to accept personal service and denying oneself the advantages of association with the person so dealt with, while being ever ready to render him help in case of need. I would welcome that kind of boycott in the case of a person addicted to drink, but not in the case of those who don't wear khaddar. For there is certainly not that sin in wearing foreign cloth as in drink.

[A:] You make me feel more at ease. I am glad you have cleared these points. Only, I don't like the idea of your making khaddar a test of moral fitness. A friend writes to me to say that he has given up wearing khaddar because it has become a cheap method of gaining popularity.

The friend makes a mistake. Am I to cease doing what I think proper because another person makes a pretence of doing that thing? That would be like my giving up speaking the truth because some people feign truth.

[A:] But can't you eliminate the expressions *shuddha* and *ashuddha* from the khaddar terminology?

I should certainly use these terms in connection with cloth. Foreign cloth for an Indian to wear would be impure. I would not apply this to the case of the Indians in England, for instance; yet just as a man is not an impure being simply because he wears impure cloth, so also a person leading an impure life does not purify himself because he wears pure clothes. The economic value of what I call *shuddha* cloth, i.e., khaddar, is always there; that is why even a prostitute may wear pure khaddar and help to that extent to keep out foreign cloth.

[A:] I don't see how you can call foreign-made cloth "impure".

I know that. We must agree to differ there. Air gathered from the plains of Delhi would be an impure commodity to be inhaled in Simla. It is in this sense that I call foreign-made cloth *ashuddha*, i.e., impure.

[A:] But I don't see that. I am however glad you have explained so many other things.

Before the fast, such talks were quite frequent with Gandhiji, which he engaged in with everybody. But after the fast, barring the discussions with Pandit Motilal Nehru, this was the first long discussion of an important and serious character.

Young India, 31-10-1924

190. NOTE ON BOOKS FOR GANGABEHN VAIDYA

[After *October 15, 1924*][1]

For Pujya Gangabehn
Ramayana of Tulsidas
Vairagya Prakarana of *Yogavasishtha*
Bhagavata Ekadasha Skandha
Maniratnamala
Panchikaran by Jayakrishna Vyas
Raychandbhaina Lekho
(Careful study of the *Gita*)
Kathavalli Upanishad
Patanjali's *Yogasutra* first Quarter

Maniratnamala is most probably available in the Ashram. It is by Tulsidas. There is a Gujarati translation of the work, which is small but very good. This is no doubt available in Bombay.

[1] It is presumed that this was written after Gandhiji received a reply to his letter of October 15.

Enquire if it is available here. If not, tell Devdas and he will procure a copy in Bombay and send it to you.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6097-A. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

191. *SPINNING FRANCHISE*

"Spinning as a voluntary sacrifice is all right, but as a qualification for franchise it is galling." This is the substance of the objection that I hear against my proposal. I must confess I am surprised at the objection, for it is offered not because it is spinning that matters, but because with the critics it is the restriction, the obligation that matters. But why? If a monetary qualification, that is, restriction, may be imposed, why not a working qualification? Is it more honourable to pay than to labour? Is it galling in a temperance association to require every member to be a teetotaller? Is it galling in a naval association to require every member to possess certain naval qualifications? Is it galling, say, in France where military skill is considered a necessity of national existence, to require every member to practise the use of arms? If it is not galling to have the requisite test in any of these cases, why should it be galling in an Indian National Assembly to have spinning and the wearing of khaddar, which is a national necessity, to be the qualification for the franchise, or which is the same thing, the test of membership? Is it not the easiest and readiest method of popularizing it and bringing it home to the people? Of course, my argument is addressed only to those who regard it as absolutely necessary that India should be self-contained in so far as her clothing is concerned and that, principally, through the spinning-wheel and the handloom.

Young India, 16-10-1924

192. *ALLAHABAD AND JUBBULPUR*

My fast and the Unity Conference notwithstanding, riots have taken place in Allahabad and Jubbulpur. No one expected that all riots will end as if by magic because of the Conference or the fast. But I do expect that the Press will write of such riots with restraint and without bias. I do hope, too, that the leaders of both the communities and belonging to all parties will co-operate

to find out the causes and deal with them and issue to the public a correct version.

Young India, 16-10-1924

193. GURUKUL KANGRI

The floods have worked havoc everywhere this year. The Gurukul, that monument of Swami Shraddhanandji's patient and self-sacrificing effort, has not escaped the ravages of the Gangetic flood. My deepest sympathy goes out to him, to the managers of the great institution and the students. I hope the appeal for funds will meet with a quick response.

Young India, 16-10-1924

194. LETTER TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

ROSHANARA ROAD,
DELHI,
October 16 [*1924*]

DEAR SIR,

As soon as I have gathered sufficient strength, it is my intention, if permitted, to go to Kohat in the company of some Mussalmans and some Hindu friends. My object in wanting to go to Kohat is to find out from the inhabitants the causes of the Hindu-Muslim dissensions and if possible, with the help of the friends, to bring about peace between the two communities. I shall thank you to let me know as early as possible whether His Excellency the Viceroy will permit me and my friends to proceed to Kohat for the purpose mentioned.

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 15912; also *Young India*, 31-10-1924

195. DISCUSSION WITH HASSAN NIZAMI

[About *October 16, 1924*][1]

Gandhiji said:

I ought to acknowledge that I have read this article of yours. I too did not approve of it. There is a reason for this. You are free to criticize, but you have made fun of the conference as a whole. Your criticism is not in the right spirit. The purport of it appears to be that you do not desire unity at all and that you disapprove of the very fact that the conference was held. Why should we not be critical? We must admit, at any rate, that those who had assembled meant to do some good work and made an honest effort to do so. You, however, have adopted an attitude of fun and ridicule alone. And what a newspaper you chose for this! *Muballig*, a paper which has long been and is still full of hatred. Could you not have chosen any other newspaper? You could have written to *Young India*. You could have admitted the *bona fides* of the conference. However, because your article appears in a newspaper which is given to venomous and acrimonious writing, some persons may perhaps get the impression that Khwaja Sahib is opposed to the very idea of unity. . . .

Are you not talking of Abdul Kadar Jilani?[2] In jail too I had read of him. Once, when he, as a child, set out on a journey, his mother had given him some gold coins. As he was but a child she sewed them up in his coat and, together with these coins, gave him the instruction not to tell a lie under any circumstances, even if heaven and earth crashed, but always to tell the truth. The party was waylaid by robbers, who searched everyone and took what they had. It was Abdul Kadar's turn. He was asked what he had on him. He pointed to the gold coins sewed inside the coat. The robbers were astonished and set him free. More than that, his truthfulness resulted in their returning the loot taken from the others as well.

Even though Islam abounds in such instances, it is not proper that you cite them before Hindus. Are there such instances only in Islam? They can be found at every step in Hinduism also.

[1] Mahadev Desai reports that the discussion took place in the fifth week after commencement of Gandhiji's fast.

[2] During the conversation Khwaja Hassan Nizami narrated how Hazrat Ghaus or Abdul Kadar Jilani won over his rowdy neighbour to Islam by his generous good-neighbourly behaviour.

However, just as one need not give up one's own religion and take to Hinduism because of these instances, similarly, one need not embrace Islam because of instances like those of Abdul Kadar. I do not mind if there are many such instances among Muslims and, because of them, the whole of India gets converted to Islam. However, just as there have been the best as well as the worst of men among Hindus, so too there are wicked persons among the Muslims also. I would not like you to cite the example of Abdul Kadar to convert anyone to Islam. You can talk to Hindus on other matters. Why do you ask the *Dheds* and the *Bhangis* to become Muslims? You could tell the Hindus, "There have been very tolerant men amongst you; you treat all creatures alike; how can you regard human beings as untouchables? Are you not ashamed of keeping humans apart?" You can serve Hinduism in this manner. By quoting the example of Abdul Kadar, I could tell Muslims, "Your religion is practised by such lovers of truth who advocate tolerance and who would forgive even their enemies. How can you bring disgrace upon them?" Thus would I serve Islam. We would then be purifying our own religion to such an extent that no one would be able to prevent those who wish to embrace it.

It would, however, be an outrage to take advantage of someone's poverty and tell him, "Come my friend, I shall give you so many rupees, pay off your debts; because your co-religionists are pestering you, you come over to us." He does this not because of his love for Islam, but because of the sum that is offered to him. What food did the people get who came to Mohammed Sahib? Dates and water, and when even that was not available, a fast. Nevertheless, out of respect for his personality and drawn by his spiritual power, people used to flock to him and embrace Islam. Speaking for myself, if a new Mohammed Sahib comes forward and, drawn by his personal magnetism, the whole world gets converted to Islam, I would not mind this in the least.

I say all this only because I know the appeal of Islam. I do not believe that Islam was spread through the sword; it has been spread by fakirs. It has spread through truth, austerity and courage. Everyone will admit that Islam has been defended by the sword; but for its spread only the fakirs can claim credit. I, therefore, assert that spreading Islam through force or favours or in any such way is not rendering service to it but rather bringing disgrace upon it. I say this only because of my love for Islam.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 26-10-1924

196. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU

[On or after *October 17, 1924*][1]

MUSSALMANS NAGPUR WIRE SAYING IF YOU DAS OR JAWAHAR GO NAGPUR AND WITH DR. MAHMUD ARBITRATE THEY WOULD ACCEPT SUCH AWARD AS FINAL. CAN YOU PLEASE PROCEED NAGPUR NOW OR IF IMPOSSIBLE SHOW THIS JAWAHARLAL SEND HIM.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489

197. TELEGRAM TO SHAHJI AHMEDALI

[On or after *October 17, 1924*]

WIRED MOTILALJI PROCEED HIMSELF OR SEND JAWAHAR. DAS CONVALESCENT AT SIMLA.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489

198. TELEGRAM TO DR. B. S. MUNJE

[On or after *October 17, 1924*]

DR. MUNJE

MUSSALMANS NAGPUR WIRE THEY WOULD ACCEPT ARBITRATION BY MOTILAL DAS OR JAWAHARLAL AND DR. MAHMUD. I TRUST HINDUS WILL AGREE. DAS BEING CONVALESCENT HAVE ASKED MOTILAL OR JAWAHAR PROCEED NAGPUR.

From a microfilm : S. N. 10489

[1] From the reference to the telegram of October 17, 1924, sent to Gandhiji on behalf of the Muslims of Nagpur by Shahji Ahmedali of Khilafat Committee, Nagpur; it read: "Dr. Syed Mahmud just arrived. Mussalmans earnestly request you to send Pandit Jawaharlal or Pandit Motilal or Mr. Das to conduct inquiry and decide jointly with Dr. Mahmud. Nagpur Muslims ready and willing to abide by Delhi resolutions. Any decisions given on those lines are acceptable to them if decided by any of three named gentlemen with Dr. Mahmud. Nagpur Muslims beg to assure you they would do nothing to harm national cause. They are deeply sensible of bad situation in country. Pray do send any of the three leaders named. Wire reply."

199. *LETTER TO ANNIE BESANT*

DELHI,
October 18, 1924

DEAR DR. BESANT,

Dr. Ansari gave me your letter with the papers today. You may put me down as a convener. I have no choice as to the place. If it is the third week of November I should make a strenuous effort to attend. I think that you should be the Provisional Secretary.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary: Courtesy: Narayan Desai

200. *TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU*[1]

[On or after *October 19, 1924*]

THANKS YOUR WIRE. SORRY ABOUT JAWAHARLAL. PLEASE URGE HIM MY BEHALF TAKE CARE HIS HEALTH.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489

201. *TELEGRAM TO C. R. DAS*[2]

[On or after *October 19, 1924*]

DELIGHTED YOU ARE GETTING BETTER. AGREE POSTPONEMENT WITH PLEASURE.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489

[1] In reply to his telegram of October 18, received on October 19, which read: "Your wire. Jawahar suffering from fever. Am leaving for Nagpur tomorrow night arriving there Monday afternoon."

[2] In reply to his telegram of October 19, which read: "Just getting better. Spare me here till 30th. Have wired Motilal. Fix 31st for meeting. Postpone Kohat for a day."

202. *A WAY*

Aso Vad 7, 1980 [*October 20, 1924*]

The Education Conference has passed a resolution that the Vidyapith should accord the first priority to primary education. I intended to place some practical suggestions about this resolution before the Vidyapith; but an age has passed before I could do so, as I was occupied with other matters. I have not, however, forgotten the subject of primary education.

But before offering any practical suggestion to the Vidyapith, I take the liberty of placing before the teachers some of my ideas about education. I have felt for many years that in the curriculum we have been placing a disproportionate emphasis on mere literacy and, in consequence, we find text-books multiplying day after day.

We have been misled into the belief that no knowledge can be imparted to children until they learn the letters of the alphabet. I have not known a stronger superstition in the field of education. This wrong notion, I am convinced, curbs the child's development. This belief is based on experience—that a child's mind can grow before he picks up the alphabet. By insisting on the alphabet, the child's development is arrested. Every teacher can see within a month what great progress a seven-year-old child can make if he imparts oral lessons instead of making him learn the alphabet. Teachers can easily talk history, geography and science to children. A child can learn the essence of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in the course of a year. Generally the child is taught these things after a schooling of four or five years. How pathetic is it that a child should take one year to say and read "Mother, give me water to drink!" By burdening the child with the alphabet, we arrest his progress, keep him from knowledge, clog his memory and in our zeal to teach him the alphabet, we distort his handwriting; we make him a slave of text-books from his childhood and ultimately we place the unnecessary burden of buying barren books on poor India.

If I could convince the teachers, I would abolish all text-books in primary education or give them only to teachers. These books have to be planned differently. Instead of teaching the child the letters of the alphabet in the beginning, I would teach him drawing so that the child, from the very beginning, learns to

draw beautiful designs. He may well take two or three years to learn the alphabet. We can impart orally to him a lot of practical and religious instruction in those three years. We can develop his memory by making him repeat verses from the *Gita* and other sacred books. Thereby his ears get tuned up, his tongue practises clear pronunciation, and his eyes learn to observe. Thus all the powers of the child can be developed simultaneously. Meanwhile the alphabet can be introduced to him as a distinct art. The handwriting of young people today is deplorable and disgusting. I say this from personal experience because my handwriting is so bad that I am ashamed to write to anyone and I always regret my crude, untrained hand. Raw cereals are not eaten; similarly, one writing a raw hand is deemed a savage. I have often felt that there should be a boycott of articles written by such a man.

If we take this first and necessary step in primary education, we shall be saved much expenditure and also add to the life-span of the children by hastening their development.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan (Education Supplement), Vol. I, No. 7, 26-10-1924

203. MESSAGE TO TRANSVAAL INDIANS[1]

October 20, 1924

Hope that Indians of Transvaal as other parts of Union will see struggle through for honourable existence in South Africa at the cost of suffering, no matter how great.

From a microfilm: S.N. 9996

204. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

October 20, 1924

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

I have written to Boro Dada today. I have missed you every moment today. Oh, your love!

My article is being posted today. It is too long to be wired.

The caretaker's son is better today. Sarojini has a relapse. Lilamani's fever persists. Kristodas is quite all right. Poor Mani-

[1] In response to a letter from Ismail Ahmed, who was proceeding to the Transvaal from Surat

lal[1]! He must return to South Africa as early as possible. It is therefore quite likely he might have to leave without meeting you. He is a picture of health. Kallenbach[2] very nearly came with him.

With deepest love,

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2614

205. *TELEGRAM TO CONGRESS SECRETARY, PILIBHIT*[3]

[On or after *October 20, 1924*]

SEND FULL PARTICULARS CASE.

GANDHI

Read the telegram to Mahomed Ali over the phone and tell him to wire to the Mussalmans and then telegraph to the Secretary Mahomed Ali's reply. Our reply to the telegram will depend on what Mahomed Ali says. Did you suggest send a wire to the Mussalmans?[4]

From a microfilm: S.N. 10491

206. *TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU*[5]

[On or after *October 20, 1924*]

IF YOU CAN GO NAGPUR WHILE DR. MAHMUD THERE I THINK IT WOULD DO. HAVE WIRED DAS AGREEING POSTPONEMENT.

[1] Gandhiji's second son

[2] Gandhiji's co-worker in South Africa

[3] In reply to the addressee's telegram received on October 20, which read: "Hindus compromising Mussalmans wavering cases half finished. Send two leaders immediately."

[4] This is written in Gujarati on the telegram received from the addressee.

[5] In reply to his telegram of October 20, which read: "Detained owing local Hindu-Muslim negotiations. Moonje with Jawahar await your instructions before leaving. Jawahar better but unable travel. I can leave tonight if wanted. Have wired Moonje. Das wires asking 31st for Delhi meeting. Wire instructions."

Please inquire who received this telegram and why it was not shown to me.[1]

From a microfilm: S.N. 10429

207. TELEGRAM TO DR. B. S. MUNJE[2]

[On or after *October 21, 1924*]

ASKED SANTANAM[3] PROCEED THERE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE DIWALI.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489a

208. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

[On or after *October 21, 1924*]

NAGPUR MUSSALMANS SAY WITHOUT YOUR PRESENCE QUESTION . . .[4] THEY REQUIRE YOUR PRESENCE WITH MOTILAL BEFORE 28TH. WILL YOU PLEASE PROCEED NAGPUR BEFORE 28TH AND INFORM MOTILALJI ACCORDINGLY.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489a

209. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU

[On or after *October 21, 1924*]

WIRED YOU ASKING YOU TAKE AZAD WITH YOU AND REACH BEFORE DIWALI. AM WIRING AZAD. WILL YOU ALSO WIRE ASKING HIM ACCOMPANY YOU AND FIXING DATE.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489a

[1] This is written on the telegram received from Motilal Nehru.

[2] This and the two succeeding telegrams have been written by Gandhiji on the telegram received from Dr. Munje on October 21, which read: "Yesterday's wire cancelled. Dr. Mahmud staying. Conversing with Mussalmans. They wired you yesterday send Abul Kalam Azad. I wired Motilalji come with him before Divali music again causes disturbances."

[3] K. Santanam; author, journalist and statesman

[4] The source is illegible here.

210. TELEGRAM TO CONGRESS SECRETARY, PILIBHIT[1]

[On or after *October 21, 1924*]

HAVE ASKED HINDU MUSSALMAN LEADERS BAREILLY PROCEED THERE.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10491

211. TELEGRAM TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA[2]

[On or after *October 21, 1924*]

KHILAFAT SECRETARY NELLORE FEARS DISTURBANCES NELLORE DURING DIWALI. IF YOU ARE WELL PLEASE PROCEED WITH SOME MOHAMMEDAN OR DEPUTE SOMEONE.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 10491

212. DISCUSSION WITH G. RAMACHANDRAN[3]

[*Tuesday and Wednesday, October 21* and *22, 1924*][4]

Among those who visited Dilkhush, during the weeks of penance and prayer, there was a young student from Shantiniketan, named Ramachandran. He is one of the pupils of Mr. Andrews and he had no difficulty in persuading his teacher to permit him to stay at Delhi for some time. On the evening

[1] In reply to the addressee's telegram received on October 21, which read: "Brickbat at Tazia excited fight. Four Mohammedans shot injured. Four Hindus shot injured. Several wounded. Few temples and Arya Samaj mandir alleged desecrated. Feelings high. Thirty-six Hindus under trial. Three cases 307/338 Penal Code."

[2] This has been written on the back of the telegram received from the Congress Secretary, Pilibhit; *vide* footnote to preceding item.

[3] This appeared in two instalments in *Young India*, 13-11-1924 and 20-11-1924, under the title, "A Morning with Gandhiji", over the signature of Mahadev Desai.

[4] In *Navajivan*, 2-11-1924, Mahadev Desai writing under the date line "Delhi, Wednesday, October 29, 1924" referred to the departure of Ramachandran "in the last week". The discussion, therefore, appears to have taken place on these dates.

when Mr. Andrews left Delhi, he took Ramachandran upstairs and said to Gandhiji, "I have not even introduced Ramachandran as yet to you. But he has been here all the while with us, helping us. He wants to ask you some questions and I shall be so glad if you could have a talk with him before he leaves tomorrow to go back to Shantiniketan." The "tomorrow" was a silent Monday, and so Ramachandran stayed a day more. On Tuesday morning he had to take his train for Calcutta. Exactly at half past five, after the morning prayer, he was summoned. He had set down his questions—the doubts and difficulties that tormented him. Yet he could not altogether trust himself at first to be able to ask all that he wanted to. But ultimately he mustered sufficient courage, and he found to his utter surprise that in a moment Bapu's gentle inquiries about him, his place, his studies, had left no room for hesitation or nervousness. It is impossible to reproduce all the conversation that Ramachandran was privileged to have that morning with Gandhiji. I can but present the barest summary.

[RAMACHANDRAN:] How is it that many intelligent and eminent men, who love and admire you, hold that you consciously or unconsciously have ruled out of the scheme of national regeneration all considerations of Art?

[GANDHIJI:] I am sorry that in this matter I have been generally misunderstood. There are two aspects of things—the outward and the inward. It is purely a matter of emphasis with me. The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward. All true Art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man.

[R:] (Hesitatingly.) The great artists themselves have declared, that Art is the translation of the urge and unrest in the soul of the artist into words, colours, shapes, etc.

Yes, Art of that nature has the greatest possible appeal for me. But I know that many call themselves as artists, and are recognized as such, and yet in their works there is absolutely no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest.

[R:] Have you any instance in mind?

Yes, take Oscar Wilde. I can speak of him, as I was in England at the time that he was being much discussed and talked about.

[R:] I have been told that Oscar Wilde was one of the greatest literary artists of modern times.

Yes, that is just my trouble. Wilde saw the highest Art simply in outward forms and therefore succeeded in beautifying immorality. All true Art must help the soul to realize its inner self. In

my own case, I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realization. I can claim, therefore, that there is truly sufficient Art in my life, though you might not see what you call works of Art about me. My room may have blank walls; and I may even dispense with the roof, so that I may gaze out upon the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious Art of man can give me the panoramic scenes that open out before me, when I look up to the sky above with all its shining stars? This, however, does not mean that I refuse to accept the value of productions of Art, generally accepted as such, but only that I personally feel how inadequate these are compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in Nature. These productions of man's Art have their value only so far as they help the soul onward towards self-realization.

[R:] But the artists claim to see and to find Truth through outward beauty. Is it possible to see and find Truth in that way?

I would reverse the order. I see and find Beauty in Truth or through Truth. All Truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures, or songs, are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see Beauty in Truth, the ordinary man runs away from it and becomes blind to the beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise.

[R:] But cannot Beauty be separated from Truth, and Truth from Beauty?

I should want to know exactly what is Beauty. If it is what people generally understand by that word, then they are wide apart. Is a woman with fair features necessarily beautiful?

[R:] Yes.

Even if she may be of an ugly character?

[R:] But her face in that case cannot be beautiful. It will always be the index of the soul within. The true artist with the genius of perception will produce the right expression.

But here you are begging the whole question. You now admit that mere outward form may not make a thing beautiful. To a true artist only that face is beautiful which, quite apart from exterior, shines with the Truth within the soul. There is then, as I have said, no Beauty apart from Truth. On the other hand, Truth may manifest itself in forms which may not be outwardly beautiful at all. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind he was beautiful, because all his life was a

striving after Truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of Truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see Beauty in outward forms also!

[R:] But, Bapuji, the most beautiful things have often been created by men whose own lives were not beautiful.

That only means that Truth and untruth often co-exist; good and evil are often found together. In an artist also not seldom the right perception of things and the wrong co-exist. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these moments are rare in life they are also rare in Art.

[R:] If only truthful or good things can be beautiful, how can things without a moral quality be beautiful? . . . Is there truth, Bapuji, in things that are neither moral nor immoral in themselves? For instance, is there truth in a sunset or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night?

Indeed these beauties are truthful, inasmuch as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How else could these be beautiful, but for the Truth that is in the centre of creation? When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances, if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul, is a delusion and a snare; even, like the body, which often does hinder you in the path of salvation.

[R:] I am grateful to hear your views on Art, and I understand and accept them. Would it not be well for you to set them down for the benefit of the younger generation in order to guide them aright?

That I could never dream of doing, for the simple reason that it would be an impertinence on my part to hold forth on Art. I am not an art student, though these are my fundamental convictions. I do not speak or write about it, because I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. Whatever I might have been able to do in my life has proceeded more than anything else out of the realization of my own limitations. My functions are different from the artist's and I should not go out of my way to assume his position.

[R:] Are you against all machinery, Bapuji?

How can I be when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning-wheel itself is a

machine; a little tooth-pick is a machine. What I object to, is the *craze* for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on "saving labour" till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.

[R:] Then Bapuji, you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today?

I would unhesitatingly say "yes"; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be the mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be over-worked and machinery instead of becoming a hindrance will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but limitations.

[R:] When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go.

It might have to go, but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine, in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.

[R:] But, in that case, there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.

Yes. But I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized, or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is an alteration in the conditions of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not

a mere drudgery. The machine will, under these conditions, be as much a help to the man working it as to the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease, and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, and not greed, the motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; they will continue to provide the spindles; but when the spindle gets wrong every spinner will have a machine of his own to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will come right.

Ramachandran was evidently not satisfied with this. He had understood Gandhiji to be against all machinery and he had felt that this was right too. So he wanted to go to the root of the matter. But it was getting late and he had many more questions to ask.

Don't mind losing your train. I am prepared to satisfy you. You may ask any questions you like this morning, and it won't tire me now in the least.

The young friend had by no means exhausted his list of questions. The assurance from Gandhiji that he would give him full liberty that morning put him entirely at ease and gathering courage once more he proceeded with the next question which dealt with the institution of marriage.

[R:] The third question that I would like to ask you is whether you are against the institution of marriage.

I shall have to answer this question at some length. The aim of human life is *moksha*. As a Hindu, I believe that *moksha* is freedom from birth, by breaking the bonds of the flesh, by becoming one with God. Now marriage is a hindrance in the attainment of this supreme object, inasmuch as it only tightens the bonds of flesh. Celibacy is a great help, inasmuch as it enables one to lead a life of full surrender to God. What is the object generally understood of marriage, except a repetition of one's own kind? And why need you advocate marriage? It propagates itself. It requires no agency to promote its growth.

[R:] But must you advocate celibacy and preach it to one and all?

Yes. Then you fear there will be an end of creation? No. The extreme logical result would be, not extinction of the human species, but the transference of it to a higher plane.

[R:] But may not an artist or a poet or a great genius leave a legacy of his genius to posterity through his own children?

Certainly not. He will have more disciples than he can ever have children; and through those disciples all his gifts to the world will be handed down in a way that nothing else can do it. It will be the soul's marriage with the spirit; the progeny being the disciple—a sort of divine procreation. No! You must leave marriage to take care of itself. Repetition and not growth would be the result; for lust has come to play the most important part in marriage.

[R:] Mr. Andrews does not like your emphasis on celibacy.

Yes, I know that is the legacy of Protestantism. Protestantism did many good things, but one of its few evils was that it ridiculed celibacy.

[R:] That was because it had to fight the deep abuses in which the clergy of the age had sunk.

But all that was not due to any inherent evil of celibacy. It is celibacy that has kept Catholicism green up to the present day.

Ramachandran's last question was about the much discussed "Spinning Franchise". Ramachandran assured Gandhiji, at the outset, that he was a spinner, but had to confess that he, with three friends at Shantiniketan, only began spinning after they had heard of the fast. He also affirmed that he believed in universal spinning. But he could not understand how the Congress could compel its members to spin. Persuasion and not compulsion should be the method.

I see you go even farther than Mr. Andrews. He would not have the Congress to compel its members; but he would fain become a member of a voluntary spinning association, with rules about spinning. You object to any such association whatsoever?

Ramachandran sat silent.

Well, then I ask you, has the Congress any right to say that its members shall not drink? Will that be a restriction of the freedom of the individual too? If the Congress exercised the right of enjoining abstinence from drinking there would be no objection. Why? Because the evils of drink are obvious. Well, I say that in India today, where millions are on the brink of starvation and plunged in utter misery, it is perhaps a much worse evil to import foreign cloth. Think of the starving millions of Orissa. When I went there, I saw the famine-stricken. Thanks to a kind superintendent, who was in charge of an industrial home, I saw also their children, bright, healthy and merry, working away at their

carpets, baskets, etc. There was no spinning, because these other things were much in vogue at the time. But on their faces there was the lustre of joyful work. But when I came to the famine-stricken, what did I see? They were merely skin and bone, only waiting to die. They were then in that condition, because they would under no circumstances work. Even though you had threatened to shoot them, if they refused to work, I am sure they would have preferred to be shot, rather than do any honest work. This aversion from work is a greater evil than drink itself. You can take some work out of a drunkard. A drunkard retains something of a heart. He has intelligence. These starved men, refusing to work, were like mere animals. Now, how can we solve the problem of getting work out of people like this? I see no way except that of universalizing spinning. Every yard of foreign cloth brought into India is one bit of bread snatched out of the mouths of the starving poor. If you could visualize, as I can, the supreme need of the hour which is to give India's starving millions a chance to earn their bread with joy and gladness, you would not object to the Spinning Franchise. I take the Congress to be a body of men and women who accept the paramount necessity of spinning. Why should it not ensure the integrity of membership in the body by making it compulsory for every member to spin? And you talk of persuasion. What can be better persuasion than that every member of the Congress spins regularly a certain quantity of yarn every month? How would it be honest for the Congress members to ask people to spin, when they do not spin themselves?

[R:] But how can you exclude people, who do not spin, from the Congress? They may be doing valuable service to the nation in other ways.

Why not? What is the reason for the property franchise? Why is it necessary for a man to pay four annas to be a member? And why is age considered a necessary qualification? Would the eight-year-old violinist prodigy of Italy have the franchise? John Stuart Mill, however clever he may have been, when he was seven years old, with his knowledge of Greek and Latin, had no franchise at that age. Why were these prodigies excluded? Some men will have to be excluded under any franchise. No; today many will not accept my position, but I have faith that the day will come—it may be after my death—when men will say that after all what Gandhi said was right.

It was now seven o'clock and Ramachandran had missed his train. But he had gained what was infinitely more precious. The next morning,

before starting, he was fortunate enough to get another talk—this time a brief one, but one that at last converted him.

[R:] So, Bapuji, Truth is the main thing; Beauty and Truth are not separate aspects of the same thing.

Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist, because he saw and expressed Truth; and so was Mohammed, the Koran being the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature—at any rate—that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first for Truth, that the grace of expression naturally came in; and yet neither Jesus nor Mohammed wrote on Art. That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for.

Ramachandran reverted to his difficulties as to Gandhiji's logical position with regard to machinery.

[R:] If you make an exception of the Singer Sewing Machine and your spindle, where would these exceptions end?

Just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man.

[R:] But I was not thinking just now of the practical side, Bapuji. Ideally would you not rule out all machinery? When you except the sewing machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicyle, the motor car, etc.?

No, I don't, because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man; for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle, on the contrary, happens to be an essential thing in life—a primary need. Ideally, however, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because, like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected!

[R:] Why is it a necessary evil? May not after all some artists be able to see Truth in and through Beauty?

Some may, but here too, just as elsewhere, I must think in terms of the millions. And to the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of Beauty, in such a way as to see Truth in it. Show them Truth first, and they will see Beauty afterwards. Orissa haunts me in my waking hours and in my

dreams. Whatever can be useful to those starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today first the vital things of life and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow.

Young India, 13-11-1924 and 20-11-1924

213. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

[*October 22, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have been remiss in writing to you, knowing that Mahadev or Ramdas have been writing. I was thinking of doing so. I am keeping well. I take as much as 3½ seers of milk. But I think I shall have to reduce the quantity. I do a little walking also. I shall have to stay here till the 31st at any rate. I shall then, I think, have to go to Kohat. It depends on permission from the Viceroy. I hope you are keeping quite well. Do your bowels work regularly? Manilal has arrived from South Africa.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 458. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

214. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

Aso Vad 9 [*October 22, 1924*][2]

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI,

I have your letter. I have forgotten your leaflet. Please send me another copy. This is my message:

Stick to truth alone. We should act non-violently in everything we do. For the sake of the country and for our own sake, we should ply the charkha, wear khadi; Hindus and Muslims should live amicably, Hindus should give up untouchability, considering the untouchables to be our brothers; drunkards should give up drinking, addicts should give up their bad habits. This is the duty of us all, and if we do it we will get swaraj very soon. I am aware of what is being published in *Navajivan* and *Young India*. I believe there is nothing wrong in it. Those experiences are not extraordinary, and are useful to all. They

[1] & [2] From the postmark

teach the lesson of ahimsa and *tapas*, which everyone should learn. It no doubt involves my praise to some extent, but that is inevitable and so long as I have not resumed editorial responsibility it may be condoned. However, your viewpoint also deserves to be considered and kept in mind. I should not allow myself to be affected by all that praise.

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAI DAHYABHAI
TALUKA SAMITI
DHOLKA
Via AHMEDABAD

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2690. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

215. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Aso Vad 9 [October 22, 1924][1]

I am sorry to read about Chi. Taramati's bad luck[2]. And I am pained by the thought that she must have felt very miserable, and that Anand must have been deeply affected. I have become so indifferent about birth and death that it hardly affects me. The more I think, the more I see that they are forms of the same thing. Yesterday I came suddenly on a sentence: "Why do you grieve over death, O man? The soul will be in a better state after death. Do you not see that it never dies?" The intellect accepts all this, but many a time the heart does not. And that is the difficulty. True strength is that of the heart. The intellect seems to be insignificant. If the intellect says, "I love you", but the heart refuses to do so, what good is the intellect's saying that it does?

[From Gujarati]
Bapuni Prasadi, p. 79

[1] As given in the source
[2] Delivery of a still-born child

216. LETTER TO N. M. KHARE

Aso Vad 9 [*October 22, 1924*][1]

BHAI PANDITJI,

I have your nice letter. It is not easy to become a *bhakta*. Tulsidas described himself as a rogue; while Surdas called himself a sinner and a sick man. What are we before them? It would be enough if we are alert and careful. Your letter does show that you are so. A man who keeps alert and careful and does not deceive himself, is bound to progress, for he is ever aware of his errors and tries to avoid them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 254. Courtesy: Lakshmibai Khare

217. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI[2]

[On or after *October 22, 1924*]

POSTING YOU THOUSAND WITH PARTICULARS.

From a photostat: S.N. 10322

218. THE LAW OF LOVE

A friend tells me that whilst I am wooing the Swarajists, the Liberals and others, I seem to be forsaking the No-changers and that they are bewildered at the change I am undergoing. The friend asks me to state my position from the No-changers' standpoint and to explain the seeming transformation in my attitude. He says I must clearly define the benign aspect of non-co-operation or satyagraha that I adumbrated at the Excelsior Theatre meeting[3] in Bombay.

[1] From the postmark

[2] In reply to his telegram received on October 22, which read: "Recommend monthly contribution one thousand for Vykom from earmarked satyagraha fund. Urgent necessity."

[3] *Vide* "Speech at Excelsior Theatre, Bombay", 31-8-1924.

In the first instance, I would clear the ground by saying that my own views remain unchanged. I swear by non-violent non-co-operation and all the boycotts that follow from it. But I see as clearly as daylight (this I did not see at Juhu) that the country as a whole has not understood non-violence and therefore has not understood the non-co-operation that was presented to it. I therefore see equally clearly that the keeping up of non-co-operation without its active principle, non-violence, must do harm to the country. It has done much harm already, in that it has divided the country into opposing parties. In such circumstances, non-co-operation as a national programme must for the time being be suspended. The root of non-co-operation is in satyagraha, which is love. The law of love—call it attraction, affinity, cohesion, if you like—governs the world. Life persists in the face of death. The universe continues in spite of destruction incessantly going on. Truth triumphs over untruth. Love conquers hate. God eternally triumphs over Satan.

The non-co-operation that I conceived was to be a binding force. The split in the Congress ranks, and still more clearly the Hindu-Muslim dissensions, show that our non-co-operation has proved a dissolving element. I must therefore endeavour to show its benignant aspect by advising suspension, and by total surrender on my part. In so doing I do not need to woo the No-changers. They claim to know non-violence and its implications. They pin their faith on the constructive programme to the exclusion of everything else. I abate not a jot or tittle from that programme. On the contrary, every step I am taking is calculated to give strength to it. The Hindu-Muslim question is of paramount importance. We want the weight of the whole country's opinion to be brought to bear upon it. We must stoop to conquer. Retaining every bit of non-co-operation in our own persons, we must make the path of those who do not believe in it smooth for helping us and helping the country in the constructive effort. The past four years have shown us the way. We have gained much, but we have lost also much. We must conserve the gains and regain the lost ground. The mass awakening is the greatest gain. We must hold to it. The generating of mutual strife is the greatest loss. We must repair it quickly. One cannot do so unless we suspend the terrible aspect of non-co-operation. The No-changers' duty, if they are anything worth, is self-effacement, silent work. They must not fight for power or office or name. They must work silently, result or no result. They must live on

the sufferance of their fellow-workers, the Swarajists and the Liberals, if they will rejoin the Congress.

The best way to show how to do it, is to do it myself. I am therefore engaged in surrendering to the utmost of my capacity to the Swarajists as well as the Liberals. I have nothing to surrender to the No-changers; for I am supposed to have no differences of opinion with them.

I must cease to be a party man and invite No-changers to do likewise.

We must not hinder the Swarajists in their very difficult task. Wherever No-changers cannot have a majority without a bitter struggle, they must gladly and willingly and gracefully yield to the Swarajists. If they have power or office, it must be by virtue of service, not by manipulation of the vote. The vote is there, no doubt. But it must come, if it is to come, without the asking. Is it not easy enough to see that service requires no power, no office, no prestige? I would like every one of us to be a mere servant of the nation. I would like No-changers so to behave as to be wanted by Swarajists, Liberals and all others. But whether they do so or not, I must act up to my faith. God weighed me at the last All-India Congress Committee and found me wanting. My pride told me that I must yet fight the Swarajists. But the unquenchable spirit of service in me tells me that I must fight neither the Swarajists, nor the Liberals, nor the Englishmen. I must prove to everyone that I am what I profess to be—their friend and servant. My creed is service of God and therefore of humanity. I can neither serve God nor humanity, if as an Indian I do not serve India, and as a Hindu I do not serve the Indian Mussalmans. Voluntary service means pure love. I must strive my utmost, during the coming year of grace, to express in every little act of mine whatever love I am capable of.

Young India, 23-10-1924

219. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD[1]

[On or after *October 23, 1924*]

M. A. K.
CALCUTTA

MAHOMED UNABLE LEAVE. GET DR. MAHMUD.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 10489

220. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

October 24, 1924

P. S. V.
VICEREGAL CAMP

MAY I HAVE REPLY BY WIRE MY LETTER DATED 16TH.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 15912

221. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

October 25, 1924[2]

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

Your loving messages continue to come daily. Mine you must take for granted. I am quite well. The Youngs are by me as I am writing this. I am to stop in this bungalow up to even the first few days of November if necessary. Rughbir Singh has been very kind.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2620

[1] This was sent on receipt of Sunder Lal's telegram of October 23, from Jubbalpur which read: "Trying settlement. Wire Maulana Abul Kalam come direct immediately else send Maulana Mahomed Ali or some equally prominent Mohammedan. Urgent. Wire reply."

[2] From the postmark; the source has "1925".

222. *HINDUS AND MUSLIMS*

The Conference for unity was only the starting point of unity. Its resolutions were inadequate; those attending it were imperfect; hence the beginning too has been deficient. Nevertheless, the Conference was of great importance. It will strike deep roots; it is our duty to protect and water the tender plant it has set up.

We shall find on deeper reflection that the solution to this difficult question lies in one thing alone. One should never take the law into one's own hands. It is uncivilized to take possession of the house across the street because I believe it is mine. I should prove my claim before the *pancha* or the law-court and respect the verdict given by one or the other. Where this rule is not followed, the people perish. No comment is necessary at all where both parties abide by this golden rule. But even where one party is bent on violence, it is enough if the other party abides by this rule. It is certain that the latter will not come to harm in the end. Let us suppose a third person takes possession of my house. In a well-organized society, the *pancha* would certainly have it restored to me. In a less organized society, law-courts would do this work. Public opinion is the sanction behind the *pancha*, whereas prisons and guns are the sanctions behind the courts. In either form of organization the person who does not resort to violence can regain his possession.

Disputes between us will undoubtedly continue so long as we do not abide by this inescapable rule; and it is an obvious fact that we shall never be able to win swaraj by peaceful means so long as such disputes continue. It may be that neither Hindus nor Muslims are enamoured of swaraj and both prefer domestic disputes to swaraj. No arguments would appeal to such people. But for those who desire swaraj there is no alternative to the above rule. We who find it difficult to live without swaraj will not resort to the uncivilized rule of violence.

However, some occasions arise when, despite one's firm resolution to appeal to the *pancha* or the law-court, one has willingly or unwillingly to participate in acts of violence, or to run away or to face death peacefully. What should I do if I am attacked by someone as I am passing before a mosque singing devotional songs? What should I do if someone starts placing a tombstone in my own premises or what should a poor Muslim do if

attacked by a Hindu while killing a cow inside his own house? In all these three instances there is no time to wait for the law to take its course. What then should those individuals do?

If they can peacefully face death, there is no better way out. Even the *pancha* is an inferior alternative. But not many can make such a sacrifice. Should one then run away? That is a sign of cowardice. So, ordinarily, there remains only one way out. Everyone in such a situation finds the means of self-defence by exchanging blows. Under a well-organized government each individual does have, and should have, this right.

However, such occasions arise only rarely. The chances of a good person being put to such a test are one in a hundred. The common experience is that God does not put to test the person who remains peaceful. On impartial consideration we shall find that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, both the parties are to a greater or less extent responsible for the resulting violence. In all such instances, even one party can, if it wishes to, remain free from blame. And here, the one who remains blameless is the victor.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 26-10-1924

223. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY[1]

October 27, 1924

P. S. V.
VICEREGAL CAMP

THANKS WIRE. IT IS MY INTENTION LEAVE DELHI WITH COLLEAGUES FIRST NOVEMBER OR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE THEREAFTER. STAY RAWALPINDI TWO OR THREE DAYS AND THEN PROCEED KOHAT STAYING THERE THREE OR FOUR DAYS.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 15912

224. LETTER TO LAJPAT RAI

October 27/28, 1924[2]

DEAR LALAJI,

You have probably read *Milap* of 24th instant. It contains a statement by a girl implicating the Ali Brothers. I showed it to Maulana Mahomed Ali. Here is a copy of his statement. Could you please see the editor of the paper and ask him if he has any further evidence to prove the allegations in the statement? In my opinion he should have sent a copy of the statement to the Maulana before publishing it. What I think should now be done is for the editor to call upon the parties to substantiate the allegations or withdraw them to the extent that is necessary. If they would let us investigate the statement as arbitrators we should take up the matter. Even if the girl's statement is substantially correct, apart from the allegations against the Ali Brothers and others, it is a case we should probe if we are given the facilities. If you agree with me and if the editor of *Milap* would help us, I would consult the other members of the Board.

[1] In reply to the addressee's telegram of October 26, which read: "You do not state in your letter dated October 16, when you propose to visit Kohat. Kindly send your reply by telegram."

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Lajpat Rai", 28-10-1924.

If I get the permission I have asked for for self and colleagues to proceed to Kohat, I would like to leave here about the Ist of November. Can you come? If your health will not permit, whom do you recommend? I would not like you to come if it endangers your health at all. My better nature tells me not to ask you [but] seeing that you are at [present] reported to be better, I feel I must put the thing before you. I contemplate two to three days' stay at Rawalpindi and as many in Kohat.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 15937

225. *LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

Diwali [*October 27, 1924*][1]

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter. I have not received Kallenbach's cable. What you say in this letter is the same that you wrote in your previous one. I am not yet ready to send you the notes you want for *Y.I.* A great deal of my time is spent in the care of my body. Taking food five times means 2½ hours, sleeping 1 hour, massage 1 hour, as many as 2 hours for walking, bath ½ hour. Thus seven hours of the day are spent on this routine. To this add the taboo that no work should be done at night. This convention I am breaking for the first time today. I stay in bed right up to seven in the morning. Now tell me how many hours remain for work? Remember that, after the 21 days' fast, my condition is like that of a child. I have to let myself be brought up as a child is. However I like fasting. It would have been difficult to live without it.

Blessings from
BAPU

DEVDAS
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2127

[1] From the postmark

226. TELEGRAM TO ABDUL BARI[1]

[On or after *October 27, 1924*]

MAULANA ABDUL BARI SAHIB
FIRANGI MAHAL
LUCKNOW

YOUR WIRE. SOME RELIABLE WITNESSES SHOULD BE SENT HERE.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 10492

227. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY[2]

[*October 28, 1924*]

THANKS WIRE. WHILST I BOW TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S DECISION I VENTURE TO STATE THAT IT WAS NOT MY INTENTION TO ENCOURAGE HINDU REFUGEES AT RAWALPINDI TO RETURN KOHAT UNLESS KOHAT MUSSALMANS WERE WILLING AND EAGER TO RECEIVE THEM WITH OPEN ARMS. HAD I BEEN PERMITTED TO PROCEED KOHAT IT WAS MY INTENTION TO USE WITH ASSISTANCE OF MUSSALMAN FRIENDS THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WHICH I BELIEVE I ENJOY WITH MUSSALMANS TO BRING ABOUT AMICABLE SETTLEMENT. I THOUGHT AND STILL THINK THAT HEART UNITY BETWEEN TWO COMMUNITIES CAN BE BETTER BROUGHT ABOUT BY NON-OFFICIALS THAN BY OFFICIALS. LATTER CAN UNDOUBTEDLY ASSIST IN MANY SILENT UNOFFICIAL WAYS BUT MY INVARIABLE EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT OFFICIALS AS OFFICIALS CAN ONLY BRING ABOUT ARMED NEUTRALITY BUT CANNOT RESTORE FRIEND-

[1] In reply to his telegram of October 27, which read: "Your letter. Whether *nimaz arthi* simultaneous or one after other as alleged by Hindus Mussalmans respectively requires evidence. Would you take it if so how."

[2] This was sent in reply to the addressee's telegram of October 28, stating that in Lord Reading's opinion Gandhiji's visit to Kohat would be "most unwise and undesirable".

SHIP. AS PUBLIC HAVE BEEN LED BY ME TO BELIEVE THAT MY VISIT TO KOHAT WAS IMPENDING I PROPOSE TO PUBLISH THIS CORRESPONDENCE UNLESS HIS EXCELLENCY DESIRES OTHERWISE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 15912; also *Young India*, 31-10-1924

228. LETTER TO LAJPAT RAI

Continuation[1]

October 28, 1924

DEAR LALAJI,

Since writing the first letter, I have heard from the P.S.V. saying that in the present state of things in Kohat my visit cannot be countenanced. I hope soon to publish the whole of the correspondence. Now what am I to do? I suppose, I am of no use in Rawalpindi. I can bring no comfort to the poor refugees. The question now before me is whether I should go to the Punjab now or later regarding the Hindu-Muslim question. This you alone shall decide.

What a situation in Bengal? I wonder whether the Swaraj Council meeting is coming off here on the 30th. I have as yet heard nothing from Motilalji. Mr. Das went to Calcutta yesterday.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 15938

[1] *Vide* p. 264, "Letter to Lajpat Rai".

229. *LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT*

Kartik Sud 1 [*October 29, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. My blessings are with you for ever. I do not wish you happiness, but I wish you the strength to regard unhappiness as happiness. Who knows what should be regarded as happiness? May not seeming unhappiness be happiness in reality? In fact, there is a verse[2] in Sanskrit which says: "What we consider as adversity is not adversity in reality, nor our seeming happiness real happiness; adversity consists in forgetting God and remembering Him is happiness." May this happiness be yours. You must not give up the idea of going to Hajira. Moreover, if you feel constipated there, you should think of going only to Hajira. I shall make arrangements when you write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

If I write Ramdas's address in English I would write "Esqr." after his name. But you will see that today I have omitted "Shrimati".

Nireekshan is the correct word, not *nirikshan*.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 459. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] From the postmark. The source, however, has "*Kartik Sud 2*" which would correspond to October 30.

[2] विपदो नैव विपदः सम्पदो नैव सम्पदः
विपद् विस्मरणं विष्णोः सम्पद् नारायणस्मृतिः

230. *MESSAGE TO U.P. POLITICAL CONFERENCE, GORAKHPUR*[1]

DELHI,
October 30, 1924

The policy that the Government has lately adopted in Bengal has distressed all. The distress is natural. It is not, however, owing to the lawlessness of policy; it is owing to our inability to give it a prompt reply. I hope and I want that we shall not lose patience at this critical juncture. I firmly hold that by becoming angry or impatient we shall not find the right remedy. Action can only be answered with action. And I dare say that we can answer the Government's policy of violence only by a policy of non-violence; we can answer its violent action only by non-violent action. If this is true we have to consider what non-violent action we can undertake. On a little reflection we see that the biggest obstacle in the way of any practical work that we can do is the schism between Hindus and Muslims. The obstacle to our bringing the common people together is our indifference to the charkha and khadi; and untouchability is a thing that is running the Hindu society. So long as we have not rid ourselves of this threefold sin our portion can only be, in my humble opinion, Government lawlessness, slavery and poverty. I can, therefore, offer no other counsel to the nation. If we can achieve these three aims we can demonstrate a strength even fiercer than what we showed in 1920-'21. Then we can remove the misery not only of Bengal but of the whole of India.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Hindi Navajivan, 2-11-1924

[1] Published under the caption "The Cure for Government Lawlessness".

231. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

DELHI,
October 30, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI,

Ever since the firing of the Viceregal bomb I have been taxing myself as to what we can do and our helplessness has preyed upon me. This is our conclusion! We must not do anything in haste or anger. We must therefore bow before the storm. For the time being we must revert to the old method of simply expressing our opinion and we should concentrate all-India opinion upon the lawless methods of the Government and therefore attack the principle of the Government adopting extraordinary measures and should therefore call upon the Government to repeal even Regulation III of 1818. If extraordinary powers are required by an extraordinary situation, they can be taken only upon a vote of elected representatives. I know that even this is tall talk and it jars on me. But I see no other way out at the present moment.

So much to the all-India work. If I could carry you, that is you personally and Swarajists, with me, I would ask the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. to concentrate its efforts upon the three items mentioned. Give me a compact disciplined Congress, and I can see my way again to answering Government action with popular action. But till then, and till Hindus and Mussalmans speak with one mind and till we show substantial work about khaddar and untouchability, I for one see no prospect of any effective direct action. Since the Bengal arrests, the idea of retiring from the Congress has possessed me, unless I receive the enthusiastic support of Swarajists in my proposals. I simply want to bring into being a compact organization which will respond to every call. I do not care how small that organization is. All other non-violent activities may go on. I can understand their utility up to a point. But I am convinced that they will all be a wasted effort, if nobody concerns himself with bringing into being a disciplined and effective organization. I feel deeply hurt and humiliated that we cannot take up with any degree of effect the Government challenge. I think I have told you all you can want to know from me. I am sending you the following telegram:[1]

[1] Not given in the source

I sent a little note to Das as he passed through Delhi. Please tell him it is not want of will which keeps me tied down to Delhi. I hardly looked at the newspapers before. But since the arrests I have been eagerly scanning everything about them in all the papers that come under my notice.

I was glad you were able to go to Nagpur and more so that you are able to get the parties to agree to your and Maulana's arbitration.

I hope you are well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

232. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Kartik Sud 2 [October 30, 1924][1]

PUJYA GANGABEHN,

I am so much occupied in regaining my strength that, though I have always been thinking of writing to you, I have not been able to. I wish to share fully in your sorrow. I wish to help you as much as I can to acquire all the knowledge and strength you should. Please do not be at all impatient. We do acquire, consciously or unconsciously, some knowledge where the atmosphere is healthy. Chi. Devdas and Chi. Maganlal always give me news about you.

May all your wishes be fulfilled during the year.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6039. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

[1] The letter is evidently written after the fast in 1924.

233. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

Kartik Sud 2 [*October 30, 1924*]

CHI. DEVDAS,

Swami was complaining that you do not take enough care of your health. I want you to take good care of your body and do your work. Do not worry in the least.

Pass on to Pujya Gangabehn the letter addressed to her. I would like to write a good deal, but so long as I have to pamper the body, I will not be able to write much. Since the Viceroy has refused permission, you need not wonder if I return there immediately.

Now it is time for me to go for my walk.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 2047

234. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Kartik Sud 2 [*October 30, 1924*][1]

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. I wish you write to me more often.

I have written to your father today. I have asked him to stop worrying.

Wouldn't you think of going again to Hajira? Do you want congratulations on your having passed the examination? If you do, take it you have them. It does not matter if Dahyabhai failed in one subject. To fail in a subject only means attaining better proficiency in it. It often happens that students who fail get disheartened, but it is wrong for them to do so; only a lazy person or one who has only a job in mind may get disheartened. For a

[1] The source has November 10, 1924; however, *Kartik Sud* 2 fell on this date.

studious person, failure only provides an opportunity for putting forth greater effort.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN
C/o VALLABHBHAI PATEL
KHAMASA CHOWKI
AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro 4—Manibehn Patelne, p. 21

235. *TWO SCENES*

During my visit to Puri in 1921, I saw many things that I shall not easily forget. But among them all there were two that I shall never forget. One of them haunts me day and night.

In those days Puri had a philanthropic Superintendent of Police. He managed an orphanage. He showed it to me. It had many happy, well-looking, bright children who were engaged in all kinds of industries—mat-weaving, basket-making, spinning, weaving, etc. The Superintendent told me they were all children of famine-stricken parents, some of whom were picked up as mere skin and bone.

He then took me to an open space in the very shadow of the hoary temple where were arranged in rows the famine-stricken people who were living within twelve miles of Puri. Some of these no doubt owed their lives to the charity of the Gujaratis and the loving service of Amritlal Thakkar who doled out to them the rice he bought with the monies supplied by the Gujaratis. The life was ebbing away in them. They were living pictures of despair. You could count every rib. You could see every artery. There was no muscle, no flesh. Parched, crumpled skin and bone was all you could see. There was no lustre in their eyes. They seemed to want to die. They had no interest in anything save the handful of rice they got. They would not work for money. For love, perhaps! It almost seems as if they would condescend to eat and live if you would give them the handful of rice. It is the greatest tragedy I know of—these men and women, our brothers and sisters, dying a slow torturing death. Theirs is an eternal compulsory fast. And as they break it occasionally with rice they seem to mock us for the life we live.

"Why could they not be kept like the orphans?" I asked the Superintendent. "They will not work and will not stay there", was the reply. The Superintendent might also have added that he could not accommodate thousands of starving men and women, even if they were ready to work, in an asylum.

There is on the face of the earth no other country that has the problem that India has, of chronic starvation and slow death —a process of dehumanization. The solution must therefore be original. In trying to find it we must discover the causes of the tremendous tragedy. These people are starving because there is chronic famine in Orissa due to floods or want of rains. They have no other occupation to fall back upon. They are therefore constantly idle. This idleness has persisted for so long that it has become a habit with them. Starvation and idleness are the normal condition of life for thousands of people in Orissa. But what is true of Orissa is to a less extent true of many other parts of India.

We may find remedies to prevent floods. That will take years. We may induce people to adopt better methods of cultivation. That must take still more years. And when we have stopped inundations and have introduced among millions up to date cultivation, there will still be plenty of time left with the peasants if they will only work. But these improvements will take generations. How are the starving millions to keep the wolf from the door meanwhile? The answer is through the spinning-wheel. But how are the people who will not work at all be made to take up even the spinning-wheel? The answer is by us the workers, the educated and the well-to-do people taking up spinning. An ocular and sincere demonstration by thousands who need not spin for themselves cannot fail to move these starving men and women to do likewise. Moreover it will be only when *we* take up spinning that we shall be able to get the requisite number of skilled spinners who can give the necessary preliminary tuition, choose the right kind of wheel, do the repairs, etc. Lastly voluntary spinning by thousands cannot but cheapen khaddar and enable us to produce finer counts. If, therefore, we will identify ourselves with our famishing countrymen, we will not only not cavil at the spinning franchise but would welcome it as the surest way to the solution of the problem of the ever-deepening and distressful poverty of the masses.

Young India, 31-10-1924

236. *CONFLICT OF INTERESTS*

The expected has come to pass. The English Press had foreshadowed for us the Viceregal bomb. It is the Hindu new year's gift to Bengal and through Bengal to India. The step need not surprise us nor terrify us. The Rowlatt Act is dead but the spirit that prompted it is like an evergreen. So long as the interest of Englishmen is antagonistic to that of Indians, so long must there be anarchical crime or the dread of it and an edition of the Rowlatt Act in answer. Non-violent non-co-operation was the way out. But we had not the patience to try it long enough and far enough. Let us see how the English interest is antagonistic to the Indian. Lancashire mills are the greatest drag on India's economic progress. It is obviously India's interest not to have a yard of Lancashire or other foreign calico or yarn. But the Lancashire mill-owners will not readily and without a struggle give up the immoral traffic. I call it immoral because it has ruined India's peasantry and brought it to the verge of starvation. India supports (for her) a heavily paid English civil service. It is obviously to her interest that this service, no matter how efficient it may be, is replaced by an indigenous service, no matter how inefficient it may be. Man cannot breathe with borrowed lungs. India supplies the training ground for English soldiers and is therefore taxed to the bleeding point in order to finance a military budget that absorbs more than half her total revenue. It is again clearly India's interest that she should learn to defend herself even though it may be indifferently for the time being. For her to be dependent for her defence, external or internal, upon outsiders, however capable or well meaning they may be, is to lose three quarters of her manliness.

For doing the right thing the English are at an advantage. For they belong to the governing race. Those who are not in the civil service—the large body of lay Englishmen and Englishwomen—ought to perceive the disastrous results of the British domination. The so-called *Pax Britannica* is no compensation for the deprivation of liberty and the ever-growing pauperism. In spite of the elaborate Viceregal reasoning, I venture to submit that no case has been made out for the arbitrary measures adopted by His Excellency. Let violence be punished by all means. I am no defender of anarchy. I know that it can do no good to the country. But it is one thing to punish crime actually attempted or

committed. It is totally another thing to give arbitrary powers to the authority to arrest persons without warrant and that too on mere suspicion. What is happening now is to terrorize suspects. Past experience shows that more innocent people are punished than the guilty, whenever the Government has yielded to panic. Everyone knows that by far the largest number of persons punished in the Punjab in 1919[1] were totally innocent of the crimes imputed to them. Whenever a government resorts to arbitrary powers, it really means that it has not popular opinion behind it.

Deshbandhu Das, by his work in the Bengal Council, has shown that the Bengal Government has not the popular opinion behind it. The theory that he has set up a system of terrorism must be rejected. There is no evidence to support the charge. You cannot win popular elections by terrorism nor can you hold a large party together by it. There is something inherently commendable to the people to make the Deshbandhu the undisputed master of his large party in Bengal. The reason is on the surface. He wants power for the people. He does not bend the knee to the rulers. He is impatient to release Bengal and India from the triple burden. Let him sing another tune, let him say he does not want freedom for the people, and he will lose his influence in spite of the terrorism imputed to him. I have my differences with the Deshbandhu, but they cannot blind me to his burning patriotism or his great sacrifice. He loves the country just as much as the best of us. His right-hand men have been torn away from him. They are all men of status. They enjoy the confidence of the people. Why should they not have an open, fair and ordinary trial? The summary arrest of such men under extraordinary powers is the surest condemnation of the existing system of Government. It is wrong, it is uncivilized for a microscopic minority of men to live in the midst of millions under the protection of the bayonet, gunpowder and arbitrary powers. It is no doubt a demonstration of their ability to impose their authority upon a people more numerous than they, but it is also a demonstration of barbarism that lies beneath a thin coating of civilization.

To the Bengalis who are on their trial, I respectfully say:

If you are innocent, as I believe most of you are, your incarceration can only do good to the country and yourselves, if you

[1] The source has "1918".

will take it in the right spirit. We will not win freedom without suffering.

To those who may be real anarchists and believers in violence I urge:

Your love of the country commands my admiration, but you will permit me to say that your love is blind. In my opinion India's freedom will not be won by violence but only by the purest suffering without retaliation. It is the surest and the most expeditious method. But if you persist in your faith in the method of violence, I ask you to make a bold confession of your faith and dare to suffer even though it be unto death. Thereby you will prove your courage and honesty and save many innocent persons from involuntary suffering.

Young India, 31-10-1924

237. *THE KEY TO SUCCESS*

[*October 31, 1924*][1]

Some Urdu literature happened to come my way when I was in the Yeravda Jail. Through it I had the great advantage of informing myself about Islam. A copy of *Hindustani Shikshak* that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had given me, I already had. Having read it I became eager to read more. What books worth reading were with Mr. Shwaib Qureshi, I had sent for. But I had become a little impatient. I searched the jail library for books in Indian languages. To my pleasant surprise I found Urdu, Marathi, Tamil, Kanarese and Gujarati books there. To be sure the books were very few, but they were enough for my need at the time. The catalogue that I saw included Urdu text-books on religion for Muslim prisoners. I was delighted. I thought that by reading these text-books I would not only be improving my knowledge of Urdu but would also have an opportunity of finding out what Muslim children were being taught. In the text-book for grade two there are a number of instructive lessons. In one lesson some incidents from Prophet Mohammed's life are described. There are stories in it showing the Prophet's humility, generosity, evenness of feeling for enemy and friend, ability to for-

[1] The original article in English appeared in the first issue of Mahomed Ali's weekly, *Comrade*, revived on October 31, 1924.

give, punctuality and fear of God. Take, for instance, his behaviour towards the Jew money-lender who had gone to abuse and denounce him. Hazrat Omar felt that great insult was being offered to his preceptor. He could not bear it. But the Prophet took his disciple to task and asked him to pay the money-lender not only the principal but also something more as a token of repentance for the wrong he had done. This extraordinary treatment of the money-lender had a consequence that Hazrat Omar had never hoped for. That Jew, it is said, embraced Islam. In this same lesson there is something about a non-Muslim also. Once the Prophet was sleeping under a tree, alone and unarmed. A man went to him and said, "Speak up, Mohammed, who is there to save thee now?" The answer was: "Allah." The man began to tremble like a leaf and the sword fell from his hands. The Prophet took up the sword and asked him, "Now it is your turn, say who can save you now?" The infidel trembled as he answered, "There is no one except you." The Prophet did not take his life, but generously forgave him. The infidel became a Mussalman then and there.

These one or two examples are not the only ones concerning humility and generosity towards enemies and antagonists. The life of Prophet Mohammed written by Maulana Shibli contains long stories illustrating these. Ideal behaviour is prescribed as the method of purification or *tabligh*. In my humble view this is the right and proper religious preaching. Preaching through ideal behaviour is the most innocent, flawless, telling and potent preaching.

I do not write this article to suggest how the preaching should be done. My aim is simple: all of us taking a lesson from the life of Prophet Mohammed. If we want the unity of the heart to be established we must emulate Prophet Mohammed in his forgiveness and tolerance.

If there are readers who are not impressed by the stories from the Prophet's life, they should turn the pages of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. They will find in these books a good many examples of generosity and tolerance. We do not need detailed resolutions proclaiming disobedience of laws. If we but follow the basic principles of our respective religions, we will see how many among us have become irreligious and godless. By using violence to subjugate one another we are using violence against our own souls. Instead of the two communities doing their appointed tasks and trying to secure rights by doing their respec-

tive duties, they are insisting on the rights alone and have forgotten their duties.[1]

India is like a bird whose wings are the Hindus and the Mussalmans. But the wings have become palsied and therefore disabled the bird from soaring high in the air and breathing the pure bracing air of freedom. Surely to leave us thus paralysed is not the essence of Hinduism nor of Islam. Is it the religion for the Hindus to weaken the Mussalmans and *vice versa*—for the one to refuse to help the other? Should religion be a destructive force destroying freedom and all that is best and noblest in man? The *Comrade* and the *Hamdard* have been resuscitated to tell the Hindus and the Mussalmans that the only condition on which unity and freedom are possible is mutual toleration amongst all who call themselves Indians, be they Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis, Jews or what not. In reviving his papers, *Comrade* and *Hamdard*, Maulana Mahomed Ali is certainly taking upon his shoulders a great responsibility. But he is a godfearing man, his trust is in God and God makes clear what to us may be impenetrable darkness. I, therefore, add prayer to his own that his mission may be blessed with success, that he may always have the right word for all, friend and foe, that he and his assistants may write nothing in anger or haste and that every word in *Comrade* and *Hamdard* may be a power for the good of our country and through it of humanity and that his papers may be the promoters of peace and goodwill among the people in this land professing different faiths.

I have lost no occasion for advertising friendship of heart that exists between the Ali Brothers and myself. They claim to be, as they are, pucka Mussalmans and I claim to be a pucka Hindu. That fact has proved no bar to the real affection and perfect trust between us and if it is possible for such friendship to exist between some Mussalmans and some Hindus, we may deduce by a simple rule of arithmetic that it must be equally possible for millions of Hindus and millions of Mussalmans if only they will it. This friendship the *Comrade* and the *Hamdard* will, I am confident, seek to promote in every way and chiefly by presenting what is best and noblest in Islam. May God grant them speedy success and grant it in full measure.

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 2-11-1924

[1] The succeeding paragraphs are from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 2-11-1924, which reproduced them from the *Comrade*.

238. MESSAGE TO GUJARATI JOURNALISTS[1]

In our country, I believe, whoever fails to find a better occupation takes to journalism provided he can scribble. I am, at present, obliged to go through a number of Urdu journals from upper India, and this has confirmed my belief. My experience of the Gujarati Press is much the same. In these circumstances, no one will dispute that it is desirable that newspaper editors should confer together and impose some restraints on themselves. Editorship should be accepted only as a medium of social service and not as a means of subsistence. An institution which awakens in us this sense of responsibility is welcome, and I do hope ours will be one such.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 2-11-1924

239. MY DISSATISFACTION

I am not in the least happy over what I have written[2] in *Young India* regarding the "bomb" thrown by H.E. the Viceroy. Vehement writing, even if it is charged with truth, is no answer to violent action. The Government's policy in Bengal is violent action. It can be answered only with some form of action. Just as we put out a raging fire with water, similarly we could overcome this violent action through peaceful deeds alone.

But how do we cultivate this peaceful attitude? Today, "peaceful non-co-operation" and "civil disobedience" have become mere words. If Hindus and Muslims ceased today from fighting between themselves, if hundreds of thousands of men and women in India took to spinning from today, if today the Hindus cleanse themselves of the blot of untouchability—the Viceregal "bomb" would not have exploded at all.

We have, however, forgotten non-violence, and at the slightest opportunity Hindus and Muslims start fighting between themselves. There has been little increase in the use of the spinning-

[1] Addressed to the Gujarati journalists' conference which was to meet at Ahmedabad

[2] *Vide* "Conflict of Interests", 31-10-1924.

wheel. We are still fond of foreign cloth. Only a few Hindus have done atonement for untouchability. In these circumstances, the people have no means of replying to the atrocities of the Government. The latter has attempted to clip the wings of Deshbandhu Das, while Bengal and the other provinces look on helplessly. Basketfuls of articles opposing—or expressing disapproval of—this action have appeared, but beyond that we do not seem to be able to do anything.

Hence my dissatisfaction.

I prefer to remain silent when I find that an action can be set right by action. Perhaps I would have remained silent if I were not an editor. But, as an editor, I must, I felt, express my views. Hence I wrote the article in *Young India*. I may still have to write or speak about it.

But all this is very painful to me. I was not in the least worried when the Government pursued such a policy in 1921, because, at that time, I was under the impression that we had with us an unfailing remedy and that we knew its use. I am unhappy because it has been shown that we do not know its use. I wish the reader would share my dissatisfaction. Who could harass a self-reliant India which is both united and purified? She would have nothing to do thereafter.

How to explain this simple fact to various people? I try to explain this by befriending the Muslims, by regarding the untouchables as touchable, and by spinning. I have no doubt that by doing so, the tragedy of Bengal can be avertcd, that in this lies India's liberation.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 2-11-1924

240. MY NOTE

Gujarat Not Defeated

Gujarat has not been defeated by Andhra Pradesh this time; still, there is nothing for Gujarat to gloat over. As in a barren tract even a castor oil plant stands out, Gujarat too enjoys a like distinction. But Gujarat wishes to cultivate real strength. And for this 1,700 spinners are not enough. Gujarat with a population of nine million, cannot be satisfied with the 1,700 persons who have taken to the *yajna*[1] of spinning. Not even two per cent of the population has taken to it. Not less than 10,000 persons are needed to make up ten per cent. I know the workers are making great efforts. Hence no one is to blame. The fault lies in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. It is our duty to realize what is wrong. If we do, we shall make special efforts. We who spin regularly should realize that here and here alone—in the spread of khadi and the boycott of foreign cloth—lies our economic and hence our political salvation. We shall then cling to this priceless thing and be able to infect others with our diligence.

Brothers and sisters who spin should also know that their yarn should be in the hands of the All-India Khadi Board by the 15th of the month, the date fixed for the yarn from all places reaching the central office. The spinner, however, should make up his account only on the last day of the month. For this purpose we have accepted the English calendar month. The Indian calendar varies in many provinces and our Muslim brothers count the beginning with the hejira. Hence using the English calendar is simpler. The yarn from Gujarat should be collected and sent so as to reach the head office by the 5th or 7th of the month. Much time would be saved if each individual is regular in his work. If work done collectively by many lacks regularity, everything gets disorganized and a lot of time is wasted. Hence, I hope that every individual spinner, each sub-committee, and the provincial committee will fix its own date and send the yarn on the date fixed.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 2-11-1924

[1] Sacrificial ritual

241. TELEGRAM TO C. R. DAS

[*November 2, 1924*]

YOUR WIRE. LEAVING SUNDAY[1] PUNJAB MAIL. STAYING WITH YOU. I EXPECT YOU TO AVOID ALL RUSH. TOO DELICATE YET BEAR STRAIN NOISE CROWD OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-11-1924

242. TELEGRAM TO G. D. BIRLA

DELHI,
November 2, 1924

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA
CANNING STREET
CALCUTTA

REACHING CALCUTTA TUESDAY MORNING PUNJAB MAIL.

GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 5998. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

243. MESSAGE TO "BENGALEE"[2]

November 2, 1924

I have no message to give. What shall I say? I am thinking. I am trying to see light out of darkness.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 7-11-1924

[1] November 2
[2] In reply to a telegram from Bipin Chandra Pal

244. LETTER TO HINDI SAHITYA SAMMELAN

CALCUTTA,
Kartik Sud 7 [*November 3, 1924*]

I got your telegram. Bhai Manjit Singh tried his best to persuade me. But where is the need to persuade me? All Hindi-loving people in India know of my love for Hindi. It is impossible for me to attend. I have so much work on hand that I cannot cope with it. Please therefore excuse me. I must dispose of it.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Aaj, 11-11-1924

245. TELEGRAM TO HINDI SAHITYA SAMMELAN[1]

[After *November 3, 1924*]

NO IMPORTUNITY NEEDED. WOULD HAVE GLADLY COME IF I COULD. BUT THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE. WISH THE SAMMELAN ALL SUCCESS.

[From Hindi]
Aaj, 11-11-1924

246. TELEGRAM TO ZAFAR ALI KHAN[2]

[On or after *November 5, 1924*]

MAULANA ZAFAR ALI KHAN
"ZAMINDAR"
LAHORE

WELCOME BACK YOUR POST. HOPE YOU ARE WELL. EXPECT YOU CONTRIBUTE SOLIDLY TOWARDS HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY.

From a photostat: S.N. 11712

[1] The English original is not available.

[2] In reply to a telegram from *Zamindar* received on November 5, 1924, which read : "Maulana Zafar Ali Khan released today reaching Lahore tomorrow evening."

247. TIME-SENSE

It is a common charge against us as a nation that we have no sense of the time; we are as a rule behind time. One who is too late is admittedly behind time. But it is equally true to say that one who is four hours before time is also behind time. He has neglected a hundred things to enable him to be four hours before time. The villager when he wants to catch a train reaches the station hours before the scheduled time. He may succeed in catching his train, but he will be behind time for many other things probably more important. We the educated class are too late for everything. Our meetings need not commence in time. It is a most usual thing not to commence proceedings at the appointed time. One man's absence is often regarded as sufficient reason for keeping hundreds, sometimes thousands, waiting. It speaks volumes for the patience and forbearance of a nation that can so wait. But it bodes ill for its progress.

This lack of time-sense is now being noticed in connection with the working of the spinning resolution of the A.I.C.C. To read the resolution is simple and innocent enough. But it is taxing all the resources of the All-India Khadi Board. The collection, transmission and classification of yarn requires a large organization and much organizing ability. The difficulty is increased tenfold when the workers do not work to time. The fifteenth of each month is the last date for the delivery of yarn. That date was fixed not to give more time to spinners but to give enough time to the secretaries of different committees. Only if spinners deliver or workers collect their yarn on stated dates the whole work can be efficiently organized. Each province may fix its own dates so as to enable it to send packets of yarn in time to the A.I.K.B. Instead of sending packets in instalments, there should be only one complete delivery from month to month provided that suits the arrangement of the A.I.K.B. Unless the whole work is done with clock-work regularity, it is impossible to organize it in a thorough manner. When thousands of details require attention, time is of the utmost importance. Even as the slightest slip in observing times on railways may result in disastrous consequences, so may want of attention to the A.I.K.B. time-table result in consequences just as serious to the prospect of universalizing spinning. In fact no organization is possible without punctilious regard to the observance of agreed time-tables. I trust

therefore that all the workers connected with the spinning organization will religiously keep to the times agreed to or appointed by them.

Young India, 6-11-1924

248. NOTE

The Presidential Prize

Andhra and then Bengal are running a close race with Gujarat. There is only one month left for them to win the Presidential prize. I hope that one or the other province will carry off the prize. I must not, however, disguise the hope equally strong that Gujarat will not be easily beaten. But let them all understand the terms. No yarn delivered after time can be included in the prize computation. Nor can any individual packet count that does not contain the minimum quantity, i.e., at least two thousand yards of evenly spun and properly twisted yarn. Maulana Mahomed Ali is in high hopes that Gujarat will be beaten and that his prize will be taken by Andhra or Bengal. He has no grudge against Gujarat. But he does want his prize to be taken, and he thinks that Gujarat can well afford to be beaten in fair competition. Gujarat's defeat will be victory if the competition results in an appreciably large increase in the total number of spinners. He does not want any province to get an accidental victory. It must be an outcome of honest and strenuous endeavour.

Young India, 6-11-1924

249. COMPLAINT FROM KENYA

A resident of Kenya writes:[1]

This correspondent has not written the above letter for publication, but only for my information. Yet the ideas expressed in it must have occurred to many Indians residing in Colonies. It is but natural to have such ideas. But on deeper reflection it will be clear that it is also natural for beggars to go out from here. There is political suffering at both these ends. Because there is political suffering in India, it is also there for Indians living abroad. Ending it in India would automatically bring about an end to it elsewhere. If Indian leaders do not render greater service

[1] The letter is not translated here.

to the cause of Indians abroad, it is because they are unable to do so, however much they desire to. What can a helpless person do? Of what avail is a patient's longing for food? A cripple can do nothing else than curb his desire to run. India is crippled in two ways—politically and economically. Her sons living abroad cannot certainly say to such a crippled mother: "What sort of justice is this, mother, that you do not help us and yet seek money from us?" The mother would say: "My sons, I know that you suffer; but I am a widow. How can I help you? Moreover, I am poor; you went abroad with the hope of earning some money; I believe that I can claim a share in your meal. Hence I look at you expectantly." India finds herself in such curious circumstances. Having lived abroad for twenty years, I have experienced this. We used to send money from South Africa to India even though we could not get any assistance from India. We did undergo political suffering; but we were not hard up for money. Whereas it is difficult in India to give or spend a rupee, in South Africa we were able to give away a guinea. No suppliant who came from India went back empty-handed. The reader should not conclude that in those days greater political assistance was available from India. An agitation similar to the one which is being conducted today over Kenya was on then and is still continuing over South Africa. In other words, India's sympathy is expressed through meetings and speeches in the Legislative Assembly. Moreover, let the reader have no illusions about the funds that came to South Africa from India; the funds from India arrived only when the Indians in South Africa were about to lose their wealth and their belongings and after the local Indians had collected and spent large amounts on the movement. A large portion of the funds that came from India was returned to the country. Moreover, even at that time Indians in South Africa met the expenses of some institutions in India. The all-out satyagraha of the Indians living in South Africa was responsible for their victory there. Thousands including women courted prison; some were killed; others were banished from the country; many were left destitute; a young girl[1] died of a disease contacted in prison; two youths[2] died—one as a result of the sufferings undergone in prison and the other through hardships resulting from being banished; some had to endure whipping—as a result of all this and after eight years of satyagraha the objective of the struggle was achieved and yet

[1] Valliamma; *vide* Vol. XV, pp. 153-4.

[2] Nagappan and Narayanaswami; *vide* Vol. XV, pp. 157-8 and 161.

the struggle has to be carried on. It is an inevitable law that the weapon which is responsible for victory is the only one which can preserve the fruits of victory and win more. Just as the Kshatriya loses the territory he has conquered in case the enemy gains strength or he himself loses it, similarly the satyagrahi too loses what he has gained if he loses strength or the opponent gains it. For the hardships suffered by Indians living in South Africa or in other foreign countries the remedy lies in their own hands. They will be able to uphold their self-respect to the extent that they are able to increase their capacity to put up with extreme suffering, to become pure and remain so. Indians living abroad must, at any rate, bear this in mind that they go abroad in order to make money. In spite of political sufferings, they earn relatively more there. They would earn still more if the political hardships were reduced. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped that they would not falter in helping their poor country by contributing funds to the best of their ability. They should ascertain the *bona fides* of each person who comes out to seek help. If after examining the merits and demerits of the institution and its organizer they find both fully deserving, Indians living abroad are in duty bound to help the institution from out of their purses.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 6-11-1924

250. *JOINT STATEMENT WITH SWARAJ PARTY LEADERS*

CALCUTTA,
November 6, 1924

The following is the text of the statement issued in Calcutta on the 6th instant over the signatures of Mr. Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru:

Whereas, although swaraj is the goal of all the parties in India, the country is divided into different groups seemingly working in opposite directions, and whereas such antagonistic activity retards the progress of the nation towards swaraj, and whereas it is desirable to bring, so far as possible, all such parties within the Congress and on a common platform and whereas the Congress itself is divided into two opposing sections, resulting in harm to the country's cause, and whereas it is desirable to reunite these parties for the purpose of furthering the common cause, and whereas a policy of repression has been commenced in Bengal by the

local Government with the sanction of the Governor-General, and whereas in the opinion of the undersigned this repression is aimed in reality not at any party of violence but at the Swaraj Party in Bengal and therefore at constitutional and orderly activity, and whereas, therefore, it has become a matter of immediate necessity to invite and secure the co-operation of all parties for putting forth the united strength of the nation against the policy of repression, we, the undersigned, strongly recommend the following for adoption by all parties and eventually by the Congress at Belgaum:

The Congress should suspend the programme of non-co-operation as the national programme, except in so far as it relates to the refusal to use or wear cloth made out of India.

The Congress should further resolve that different classes of work of the Congress may be done, as may be found necessary, by the different sections within the Congress and should resolve that the spread of hand-spinning, hand-weaving and all the antecedent progress and the spread of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar, and the promotion of unity between different communities, specially between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, and the removal of untouchability by the Hindus from amongst them should be carried on by all sections within the Congress; and the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organization and for such work the Swaraj Party should make its own rules and raise and administer its own funds. Inasmuch as experience has shown that without universal spinning India cannot become self-supporting regarding her clothing requirements and inasmuch as hand-spinning is the best and the most tangible method of establishing a visible and substantial bond between the masses and Congressmen and women and in order to popularize hand-spinning and its products the Congress should repeal Article VII of the Congress Constitution and should substitute the following therefor:

No one shall be a member of any Congress Committee or organization who is not of the age of 18 and who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business, and does not make a contribution of 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn per month of his or her own spinning or in case of illness, unwillingness or any such cause a like quantity of yarn spun by any other person.

Young India, 13-11-1924

251. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO CORPORATION ADDRESS, CALCUTTA*[1]

November 6, 1924

MR. MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS OF THE CORPORATION OF CALCUTTA AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

You will pardon me for not standing while addressing you. It is not from want of courtesy but from want of strength to face a big audience like this. I tender you my sincere thanks for your address and the very kind and generous sentiments expressed in it. I am not unfamiliar with this great city—the city of palaces. Nor am I unaware of the importance that is attached for the performance of civic duty. And I have often felt that though less ambitious and still less dazzling than the work on the political arena civic work is not less necessary and not less fruitful. Many a time have I rehearsed to myself what I could do if I was a member of a Corporation and when years ago I used to walk through the slums of Calcutta and compare the palaces with their beautiful and sanitary surroundings with the ugliness and insanitation of the slums, I used to say to myself that the worth and work of the Corporation of Calcutta should be measured not by the number or beauty of its palaces but by the conditions of its slums and I felt then that the Corporation had neglected its duties. Later on I had the opportunity of visiting some of its dairies and I was horrified not merely with the wretched condition in which they were kept but also at the cruelty to which the cattle were subjected by the *gowalas* in drawing by unmentionable methods the last drop of milk not unmixed with blood from the poor cattle. I commend these stray observations to your notice in the hope that during your term of office a great step will have been taken towards ridding Calcutta of insanitation wherever it exists and by municipalizing the dairies ensuring the supply of cheap and pure milk to its many inhabitants. In my humble opinion it is the primary duty of a Corporation to ensure pure air, pure water, cheap and pure milk and fruit and free education for the children of its ratepayers and I wish that this Corporation will take the first step among the cities of India.

[1] C. R. Das, the Mayor, read out the address of welcome which was presented in the Town Hall before a large gathering.

You have drawn attention to the arrest under Regulation III of 1818 of your Chief Executive Officer. I tender you my deep sympathy. It is unthinkable that under a Government supposed to be civilized a man of Mr. Subhash Chandra Basu's[1] position, indeed any man, should be summarily arrested and detained without the prospect of a trial, indeed even the prospect of knowing the reason for which he was so arrested. My views about anarchical activities are well known. I am opposed to them with my whole soul. I believe that they can do no good whatever to India. But this is not the occasion to air my views in the matter. I may be excused, however, for adding that I detest the extraordinary measures adopted by the Government just as much as I detest the anarchical activities. I can only hope that the Government will retrace its steps and abandon the procedure which can only be described as lawless and that Mr. Subhash Chandra Basu will soon be restored to the Corporation and be able to resume the services which, from all accounts I have heard, he was rendering with great ability, efficiency and integrity.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 7-11-1924

252. *SPEECH AT SPINNING DEMONSTRATION[2], CALCUTTA*

November 6, 1924

I am pleased to see you spinning. I hope those of you who are not spinning will begin spinning at once. There is a saying in Sanskrit that it is wise not to begin anything but once you begin it should not be given up till the object is attained.

Those who have taken to spinning and those who will begin spinning should resolve to continue to spin at least till swaraj is attained. I am much pleased at your silent reception today.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 7-11-1924

[1] Subhash Chandra Bose (1887-1945); popularly known as "Netaji"

[2] By the employees of the Bengal Chemical Factory

253. DISCUSSION WITH NO-CHANGERS[1]

November 7, 1924

Explaining his own feelings at the outset, Gandhiji said:

I myself have no doubts as to the rightness of my action. I was caught in a whirlpool of doubt regarding my duty; but now I feel relieved. I am certain that I could not have done otherwise than what I have done. It is the very dharma of an advocate of non-violence that he should renounce till he has nothing further to renounce. Hence I have arrived at the final decision. I should practise surrender to such an extent that my opponent would see, it is the limit and would be taken aback by it. Moreover, this is not my first experience. The ethics of giving suggests this. Give till the receiver is satisfied. Still, the surrender that I have practised in this case is not of that kind, it is not renunciation in that sense. I have surrendered whatever I did after arguing and higgling. I have retreated inch by inch, gradually, by degrees. Of course, some people believe that I have yielded more than they had expected of me.

Once you realize that non-co-operation cannot be carried on, you will see at once that there is no alternative but to retreat to the point where I have arrived. Wherever I go, I come across nothing but violence. It is so deeply embedded in the hearts of people that it would be a crime to carry on non-co-operation on a national scale. There is, however, a distinction between "national" and "individual" non-co-operation. In other words, individuals should continue to non-co-operate to the same extent that they have done so far; if, on the contrary, they give it up, their initial non-co-operation would be deemed meaningless.

Much discussion has arisen over the spinning franchise. You feel that I have surrendered a great deal, that I have turned khadi into a kind of ritual. However, that is not so at all. If you examine history, you will realize how much we have gone ahead. At the outset, there were merely pledges, pure, mixed, and so on. After that, mill-made cloth was discarded and khadi came along. Later, the spinning-wheel was introduced. Khadi was then made

[1] Gandhiji met the No-changers of Bengal in Calcutta and explained to them his reasons for signing the joint statement with the Swarajists.

compulsory for volunteers. Then again proficiency in spinning was made compulsory. Going still further, everyone was called upon to spin. After this, resolutions were passed making it compulsory for workers to spin and today we have introduced spinning as a condition to enable one to vote.

It is true that every single member may not spin. But those who spin today will not cease to do so. On the contrary, there will be an increase in the number of spinners. How many persons will be able to get yarn spun for payment? Hence the majority of members will contribute their own yarn. Those who have not themselves determined to spin, how can we force them to do so? However, we should be satisfied if they bring in yarn spun for them by others. Moreover, if you consider the matter a little more carefully, it was never accepted as a principle that every member of the Congress must spin. I should also add that many persons did not share this idea; it was mine alone; I could even say that even for me it was an ideal. It is a fact that long ago a gentleman had written to me from Ceylon asking me why every member should not be compelled to spin. However, at that time I had not given any thought to the proposal, regarding it as unfeasible. Later I considered it feasible and placed it before the country. Hence if anything has been given up, it has been taken away from my ideal, from something that I myself had conceived.

Then, again, do you feel that khadi has been reduced to a mere formality? Even that fear is groundless. It is one thing to pass a resolution in favour of khadi, it is another to say that anyone who does not wear khadi cannot become a member of the Congress. The act of voting is a very definite one, the condition for voting should not be very rigid and difficult to fulfil. Mr. Suhrawardy—the deputy mayor of the Corporation—came yesterday dressed from head to foot in khadi. He does not wear khadi regularly; but he felt that yesterday the occasion demanded that he should. Now, how can I say to people like him that even when they stand up in court, they should wear a khadi gown? I can but hope that if on national occasions he wears khadi, he will not start using foreign or mill-made cloth on private occasions through sheer waywardness. Those who are using khadi will continue to do so; those who never use it will get the opportunity of entering the Congress temple after being purified by khadi. Today even the delegates who come to the Congress do not wear khadi. Ninety per cent of the people today come to the Congress session clad in dhotis made not of khadi but of mill-made cloth. This would not happen if this condition is laid down.

The question of uniting with the Swarajists came up. Gandhiji has fully discussed that question in his own article[1]. He wound up that argument by saying

I cannot be persuaded to believe that the Government has arrested the Swarajists for the good of the people. My conviction is getting stronger every moment that the Swarajists have been arrested only in order to crush them.

In conclusion he said:

I believe that my sacrifice involves surrendering a part of my ideals as outlined in *Young India*;[2] it does not involve sacrificing anything that is basic nor is it a sacrifice of any principles. However, if you feel that I have sacrificed the essence, if you feel that my sacrifice is unjustified, you should oppose me vigorously. I had informed Shyambabu of my objective. My object today is to end chaos and bring order, to put an end to disputes and bring about harmony, to unite a lifeless people and infuse them with strength and fearlessness. If I have given rise to a party which is nurtured on blind faith alone, it is harmful to the country. I can excuse the ordinary people, but you are writers, orators and debators. You should act only in accordance with the dictates of your reason. I am not infallible. Of course, I may make fewer mistakes as I am more experienced than you. It may well be, though, that one who seldom makes a mistake, makes a terrible one when he actually does make one. It is possible that I am giving unnecessary importance to the work of Swarajists, that I am laying undue stress on Hindu-Muslim unity—in that case you should unhesitatingly choose a new path and follow it. By doing so you will show your self-respect. There are two kinds of sacrifice: that of one's individual opinion and that of basic principles. Shri Gokhale used to say that the former can be sacrificed in public interest, but the latter cannot. In view of this, you may feel free to act in whichever way you wish.

This was followed by a large number of questions and answers.

Q. The Congress will no longer belong to the poor, it will belong only to the well-to-do class. This will be so as the latter can buy yarn anywhere.

A. No, it will belong wholly to the poor. It is the duty of the Congress to provide cotton to the poor; it is for the latter to contribute their labour. The common people will not buy yarn, they will spin it themselves. Those who have an aversion to spinning or are lazy may get others to spin for them.

[1] & [2] *Vide* "The Agreement" and "Notes on the Agreement", 13-11-1924.

Q. You began non-co-operation with this wicked Government and now you are gradually giving it up. In addition to it, you now advocate co-operation with wickedness; the Swarajists have practised such deceit and lies; how can there be any co-operation with them?

A. I have never said that non-co-operation should be practised everywhere. It should be practised if otherwise we would have to participate in the wicked deeds of the opponent. Even if the allegations you make are true, we do not wish to be partners in their lies. Moreover, you tend to forget that we have resorted to non-co-operation with the Government after having co-operated with it for thirty years. There was no occasion for non-co-operating with the Swarajists or our brothers. We have hardly co-operated with them; so the question of non-co-operation does not arise. Today my only task is to bring about a change of heart among Hindus and Muslims. I seek help from all in that task only. When this has been achieved, my hopes for the immediate attainment of swaraj will multiply.

Q. You want to include even Moderates and also to find a way for those who advocate violence. What is this and how could all these be reconciled?

A. I wish to live and die for truth. I hope that people will become truthful and honest. Making everyone accept the ideal conditions that I desire would not lead to any increase in honesty, but would rather give rise to hypocrisy. The resolution that has been taken up today will promote honesty. I only want that people pledge themselves to the minimum and fully abide by it. I said therefore that the words "peaceful and legitimate" should be taken out of the Congress resolution. Rather than practise violence after taking the pledge of non-violence, would it not be better not to pledge oneself to non-violence? The country should accept my ideals if it approves of them. I shall have to put them in my pocket if the country disapproves of them. Nevertheless I did not sacrifice those points which could not be sacrificed. Supposing a Hindu comes to me and asks me to give up Hindu-Muslim unity from among the objectives, would I agree to it? Similarly, I could not possibly have accepted the use of mill-made cloth among the conditions to be fulfilled by voters, because by doing so I would certainly have ruined [the cause] of khadi.

Q. At one time you used to say that an honest shoeblack was preferable to a co-operating lawyer. Today, you are prepared to side with the lawyers and the bigwigs.

A. Yes, you are right. What I had said was literally true. There is no non-co-operation today. If it had been widespread,

if even shoeblacks had offered non-co-operation, they could keep off the co-operators. However, I am not master of the Congress. Should I wish to become a leader, it would not be by imposing impossible conditions but, rather, by laying down such conditions as can easily be fulfilled. I would have persisted on the same old path, had there been no misunderstanding, no widespread bitterness. However, those conditions no longer prevail and so I felt that I must exercise patience and forget about the struggle.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 16-11-1924

254. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, HOWRAH[1]

November 7, 1924

MR. CHAIRMAN, COUNCILLORS AND FRIENDS,

You will pardon me if I do not make a long reply to the beautiful address that you have presented to me this evening. I am just now working against time. I have got to catch the Mail for Delhi. There is a big crowd awaiting me outside and I do not know how long it will take me to reach the station. You will, therefore, forgive me if I abruptly leave the hall after I have finished my reply. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the address and the sentiments you have been good enough to express there in connection with me. The briefest and the aptest reply that I can make to this address is to repeat the reply[2] that I gave to the address of the Corporation of Calcutta, but if any addition is to be made to that reply, I look to the Deshbandhu to supplement the reply that I made last evening and I shall associate myself in anticipation with every sentence that he may express in connection with the affairs of its Municipality and with the welfare of its inhabitants. I thank you once again for the sentiments that you have expressed and for the address that you have presented to me and I hope we may before long see India in the manner in which we want to see her. I thank you.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-11-1924

[1] At the Howrah Town Hall

[2] *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Corporation Address, Calcutta", 6-11-1924.

255. *INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA*[1]

CALCUTTA,
November 7, 1924

Asked what would be the effect in the country of the agreement between him and the Swaraj Party, Mr. Gandhi said:

It is too early yet to say, but I hope that No-changers will be able heartily to accept it and that those who felt called upon to retire from the Congress in 1920, will see their way to rejoin the Congress.

Mr. Gandhi also hoped that the new change would help the production of more khaddar.

Questioned regarding the situation in Bengal and the arrests under Regulation III and the Special Ordinance, he said :

Repression should result in uniting the political parties in India, because, after such a careful study as was open to me, I retain the opinion that repression is an attack upon the Swaraj Party, in other words, upon determined and inconvenient opposition to the Government, no matter how constitutional it may be. If all parties unite in expressing unequivocal disapproval of its policy, the Government will realize that public opinion is entirely against it. Personally, I regret that, at this critical juncture, there is no atmosphere for non-co-operation or, putting it more accurately, civil disobedience, for I consider that the measures adopted by the Bengal Government are such as to call for the strongest direct action that is open to believers in the uttermost non-violence. It would be at once an answer to the Government for its arbitrary action and to the revolutionary party to show the futility of its method. I regard both repression of the type adopted by the Government and the violent methods of the revolutionary party as anarchy. The activity of the Government is possibly more dangerous, because it is more organized and is adopted in the name of law. But, I recognize that, whilst we are warring amongst ourselves and whilst the atmosphere is surcharged with violence, though for the moment turned upon ourselves, civil disobedience is an impossibility, but had the Hindus and Mohammedans not

[1] Before leaving Calcutta

lost their heads and had there been no dissensions within the Congress, I could have shown that civil disobedience was infinitely more effective and expeditious than violent methods. That civil disobedience must always be non-violent, open and strictly truthful, makes it a weapon capable of being handled by scrupulously honourable men.

Asked as to what should be the attitude of non-official Europeans in India at the present time, Mr. Gandhi said:

In my opinion, their way is perfectly clear. So far as I am aware, all India will co-operate with them in discountenancing and putting down anarchical activities, but they are expected to appreciate the Indian standpoint and Indian aspirations and make common cause with Indians in resisting the arbitrary use of authority and co-operate with them in their attempt to vindicate their fight for freedom.

New India, 8-11-1924

256. *VALUE OF TIME*

It is said of us that we do not realize the value of time. There is much truth in this complaint. I know that even our great leaders do not fully realize the value of time. Hardly any meeting begins at the appointed hour. Thousands of people wait patiently and have their time wasted.

But the English have a saying, a good one, "time is money". It is. For no task—no work—can be accomplished without time; and without work there can be no wealth. Gems which lie buried in mines have no value whatsoever. What has value is the time spent in discovering them or the effort made to get them. If gold were as easily available as iron, it would not for all its glitter have the same value that it has today. The sun's rays are a million times more beautiful than gold, but in this country we hardly value them, as we can have them to our heart's content. But where there is a dearth of sunshine, people are ready to pay a price for them.

We do not realize the loss suffered by society and the time wasted as a result of our meetings not starting punctually. However, universal voluntary spinning is giving us adequate training. So long as every individual spinner or the committee does not complete its work in time, the task of collecting and examining

the yarn, when there are hundreds and millions of spinners, will become difficult, if not impossible.

We have no cause for elation because Gujarat stands first. Where little is being done, the one who does somewhat more shines out; but so long as the one who so distinguishes himself does not reach the minimum limit, the distinction won by him would be meaningless. There are not even two thousand spinners in Gujarat today. However, even if the number reaches two thousand, it is hardly worth mentioning! Our aim is to make everyone take to khadi, to start sacrificial spinning in every home. Having regard to this objective, the figures in Gujarat have little value or significance.

If we wish to make great strides in this work, we must learn to realize the value of time. It is for this very reason that I have suggested that every spinner should spin regularly for half an hour, regarding it as his dharma. If he wishes to spin without fail for even half an hour, he should appoint in advance the time to do so. Thereby he will find that he does not miss even a single day. On the appointed day and at the appointed time, he should send his yarn to the prescribed destination.

This will save everyone's time. The sub-committees should collect yarn at the appointed time on the appointed day, so as to enable them to send their lot to the larger committees at the appointed time and the provincial committees should send it to the central committee on the appointed day. What a great deal of time is saved and how much more convenient does it become when this is done!

A fair amount of orderliness has been achieved in Gujarat. Yet, much remains to be done. This task of spinning is not for a day or for a year. It is related to the very existence of India. Without it, swaraj can be neither won nor defended. Anyone who chooses may consider swaraj in this context as meaning economic independence. This restricted meaning is sufficient for our purpose. It is my firm conviction that if we gain economic independence, all else will automatically follow.

Hence, spinning must take firm strides ahead and spread day by day. In this programme of spinning lies the test of our readiness for sacrifice, our patriotism, our ability to value time, our capacity to organize, and of our faith and our determination.

There is not much time left before the Congress session. We have no more than two months. Let us send all our yarn along with proper accounts to the All-India Khadi Association before

the 15th of the month. I would like to see a marked increase in the number of spinners. The key to this lies in our carrying out our tasks within the time appointed.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 9-11-1924

257. *LETTER TO SATISH CHANDRA MUKERJEE*

November 9, 1924

DEAR SATISH BABU,

It grieved me to find you were gone. I was looking forward to having long chats with you on all sorts of things. I hope you had no serious news to take you away so suddenly. I hope that Kristodas was not the cause. I would like you to feel at ease about him. I let him go to Chandpur only when I felt that it was the proper thing for him to go and see his people. He has made me a definite promise that he would return to me on or before the 18th instant at the latest. I am at Dr. Ansari's, Dariaganj. I hope you were quite happy at Mr. Garodia's.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. SATISH CHANDRA MUKERJEE
110, HAZRA ROAD
CALCUTTA

From a photostat: G.N. 5608

258. *LETTER TO KRISTODAS*

November 9, 1924

MY DEAR KRISTODAS,

You can imagine my grief at finding that Satish Babu had left just two hours before our arrival in Delhi. I was and am still much disturbed—I had hoped to have a long chat with him on several matters including the agreement with the Swarajists. I shall expect you here before the appointed date. We shall have to leave Delhi on the 19th for Bombay. I hope your father is well

and that you are having a good time in Chandpur. We are staying at Dr. Ansari's.

Yours,
BAPU

SJT. KRISTODAS
110, HAZRA ROAD
BHAWANIPUR
P.O. KALIGHAT
CALCUTTA
BENGAL

From a photostat: G.N. 5609

259. INTERVIEW TO A. P. I. ON CALCUTTA PACT

DELHI,
November 10, 1924

The following interview on the question of the agreement arrived at between the leaders of the Swaraj Party and Mr. Gandhi at Calcutta which a representative of the Associated Press of India had with Mr. Gandhi on his return to Delhi on the 10th instant is published:

Asked as to why, if the agreement signed by himself and Messrs Das and Nehru was intended to be an invitation to Liberals and others to rejoin the Congress, they had not conferred with them before issuing the appeal, Mr. Gandhi replied:

Such a conference was impossible before the Swarajists and No-changers could agree upon a joint course, because any appeal must be a joint appeal by the two wings of the Congress. As a matter of fact there has been no conference even with the No-changers. It is true that I met the No-changers of Bengal and discussed the situation with them, as also I met, for instance, Mr. Satyanand Bose and discussed the matter with him. But I did not even make an endeavour to secure their assent for the simple reason that I had at my disposal no machinery whereby I could ascertain the wishes of the No-changers as a body and bind them formally. I, therefore, thought it best to give my own individual opinion and place it before the country for what it was worth. You will see that the agreement is a recommendation addressed to all parties within and without the Congress. The time for a conference is now. The No-changers will express their opinion through the forthcoming All-India Congress Committee.

Maulana Mahomed Ali as President of the Congress has invited to the conference representatives of all parties including the European Association.

The recommendation made by the Swaraj Party and myself will be submitted at the meeting for their sympathetic consideration. There is no finality about the agreement except for the Swaraj Party and for myself personally. Everybody is free to appeal to our reason, and I am sure that neither the Swaraj Party nor I will stand in the way of any other settlement that may bring all the parties together on a common platform and facilitate our progress towards the common goal and supply an effective answer to the Bengal Government's repressive policy on the one hand and satisfy the ambition of the misguided anarchists on the other, and thus wean them from their error. I appeal to all the leaders to accept Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation and assist and guide the deliberations of the forthcoming conference at Bombay.

Young India, 13-11-1924

260. LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI

November 11, 1924

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Mahadev would not give me *Navajivan* Manager's letter but I insisted. I have read it. I feel deeply hurt and humiliated. I was not prepared for such a letter to you from the *Navajivan*. I dare not divest myself of responsibility for that letter. But I see that my life must close in that imperfect fashion. An imperfect man is gambling with life and burning his fingers continuously. That is the reason why some of the best men of the world have ever chosen to live alone in the company of their Maker. I have neither the heart nor the courage to part company with Swami. He is a good man. He is brave; he is honest. He has no prejudices of race or religion. But he has a something in him which makes him act offensively at times. I must ask you to forgive him for my sake. And if you will forgive him then you must tell me all you think *Navajivan* owes you. This will save me much worry.

I write this because when we meet we are full of politics and philosophy. Domestic matters are trifles for us. But they occupy

the principal part of my life. They teach me to know my limitations.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

261. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Kartik Sud 15 [November 11, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I do remember your previous letter. I did not ask Mahadev to write to you because I hoped to do so myself. Meanwhile I became very irregular and later went to Calcutta. Your letter was so urgent that it required an immediate reply. I can now only give you satisfaction by offering an apology. I am writing to Vallabhbhai to give you Rs. 5,000. The sum would be quite enough for you as you say. I am sure I shall reach the Ashram in the last week of this month. Please meet me then, so that I can explain things to you further.

We shall also talk about Shivlalbhai's land, and consider how far it is morally right to run the Wadhwan school with outside help. This question applies to many schools.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2823. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

262. LETTER TO LAKSHMI

Kartik Sud 15 [November 11, 1924]

[CHI. LA][2]KSHMI[3],

I had received your second letter. You should improve your handwriting still further. You should cultivate the habit of writing regularly to Dudabhai and me.

[1] From the postmark
[2] The source is damaged here.
[3] Daughter of Dudabhai and Danibehn who became inmates of Sabarmati Ashram soon after it was founded in May 1915; she was entrusted to the care of Gandhiji in October 1920.

I hope you are quite happy. I hope to reach there most probably by the end of this (English) month.[1] You must spin regularly and get up [early]. I wish to hear everybody saying, "Lakshmi is now a good girl."

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6100. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

263. TELEGRAM TO B. SUBRAHMANYAM[2]

[After *November 11, 1924*]

RECEIVED LETTER[3]. MY DEEP SYMPATHY WITH YOU. THINK "YOUNG INDIA" ANSWERS MOST QUESTIONS. FORTHCOMING ISSUE ANSWERS MORE.[4] AM PERSONALLY AS FIRM NON-CO-OPERATOR AS EVER.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 11716

264. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI[5]

DARYAGANJ,
DELHI,
November 12, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

You must have read[6] Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation to the forthcoming conference between the All-India Congress Committee and the representatives of other public associations. I hope that you will be able to attend the conference. The idea is to focus, if it is at all possible, every variety of opinion on the Bengal repression, which so far as I can judge is directed against constitutional agitation when it becomes inconvenient to the

[1] Gandhiji reached Sabarmati on November 26, 1924.

[2] Secretary, Provincial Khadi Board, Sitanagaram, Godavary District, Andhra

[3] Dated November 11

[4] Regarding the joint statement with Swaraj Party leaders

[5] This appears to be a circular letter addressed also to G. A. Natesan (G.N. 2221) and Dr. Sapru (G.N. 7592).

[6] The G. N. version has "seen" instead of "read".

Government, rather than anarchical activity. The idea further is to find out whether it is possible to bring together on the Congress platform all parties for joint work on a common constructive programme conducive to national growth, each party otherwise retaining its own individuality. I am sure that if you can attend, your co-operation and advice will be valuable to the conference in coming to a conclusion satisfactory to all parties.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, p. 145

265. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

DELHI,
November 12, 1924

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

It does appear to me to be necessary to have a flying column of workers, Hindu and Mohammedan, who would on a moment's notice be ready to go to afflicted parts for investigation. We may not wait always for distinguished men to go. Take for instance the case sent to you yesterday. If the statements made are true, the culprits should be exposed. If they are false, newspaper reporters should be brought to book. The investigation should be prompt and thorough. I am preparing Mahadev for the work and am trying to induce Pyarelal. The latter is unnecessarily diffident. Will Manzar Ali do the work? He may be paid for it? He should have no objection to accepting remuneration. His spinning work need not be disturbed. His activity may be confined to U.P. only, though I would prefer not to have any restrictions unless we get an army of workers in the field. For the case sent to you yesterday, I hope you will send some one at once. What about the case that was sent to you some weeks ago?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I take it you will be in Bombay with Father on Thursday morning if not earlier. I reach there that morning. Mrs. Naidu is leaving here tomorrow morning.

M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

266. *LETTER TO SHWAIB QURESHI*

November 12, 1924

MY DEAR SHWAIB,

Mrs. Naidu tells me you are in a most dejected mood and have almost become a misanthrope having lost faith in men and things. If it is so, it is unworthy of you whom I have always known and heard of as a man of God. That you are oversensitive I have discovered for myself. But that sensitiveness can be got rid of without much difficulty. Dejection is not so easy. Why have you become so? We have a long and weary battle to fight. It may become short if God so wills. But may a soldier grumble if the battle is found to be long and weary? Not surely for him to grumble. If others falter he who has faith becomes correspondingly stronger. I would like you to be stronger and more determined for all the weakness and confusion around us. So please cheer up. Open out your heart.

Kristodas was telling me you had not yet returned the Gulburga report duly completed. Do please send it or keep it ready when I come there on 20th. I hope to leave by the Express on the 18th. Probably Hakim Sahib and Dr. Ansari will be with me.

Kristodas stayed behind for a week. His people wanted to meet him badly. He therefore went to Chandpur. He returns on or before 18th.

Mrs. Naidu leaves tomorrow to prepare for the Conference.

You may not know that I am now housed at Dr. Ansari's.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

267. LETTER TO LAJPAT RAI

C/o Dr. Ansari,
Daryaganj,
November 12, 1924

DEAR LALAJI,

You will please forgive me for not replying to your letter earlier. As you know I had to run away to Calcutta where I had not a minute to spare for writing. I am yet regaining lost strength.

What shall I do in Rawalpindi? I observe that Hindus have even accepted terms from the Commissioner. I can bring them no comfort. I cannot even get at the truth. I cannot add to their creature comforts. That part is being attended to by various bodies. The one thing I can usefully do I am rendered powerless to do. If you still think I should go to Rawalpindi I would go. But this can now be only after the Bombay meeting.

Then there is our meeting. Dr. Satyapal[1] says that P. P. Conference is to take place during the 1st week of December. Will you be there till then? Shall we meet at that time or earlier? I must leave here on Tuesday next. Are you going to Bombay? Will your health permit? If you are not going to Bombay and if you want me to meet before December please wire. I must leave here for Bombay on the 18th instant, that is, Tuesday. Monday is *dies non*. The only thing possible is for me to leave here on Friday night, pass Saturday with you and leave on Saturday night returning here on Sunday. If that is not done we can meet only in the beginning of December, i.e., if we don't meet in Bombay. You may now command me as you will.

I would like your views on the statement signed by Das, Motilal and myself. The situation is as complex as it possibly can be. And the worst of it is that though everybody looks to me to find a solution I seem to fit in nowhere. My plan seems to so many of my educated countrymen to be hopelessly impracticable whereas to me it seems to be the only practicable plan before the country.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

[1] Congress leader of the Punjab

PS.

After I had written the foregoing, I received yours of the 11th instant. If after you have read the foregoing you think that I should proceed to Rawalpindi before going to Bombay, please wire. I will start at once and if you join me at Lahore we can talk on the way. All this will mean in my present state of health a great strain but it won't be unbearable if I must go through it. Please wire on receipt of this what you would have me do—whether you want me to go to Pindi or to come to you for a day. If you do send me to Pindi, I can be there only for a day. For I must leave on Tuesday night for Bombay.

I have no idea whatsoever of settling the pact at Bombay. I fully agree with you that it cannot be rushed. There must be a thorough investigation before any conclusion is arrived at. Nor is the conference going to function about swaraj. It may be possible to have a small committee to draft a scheme for submission to a similar conference. In the main, however, the conference will confine itself to the answer to repression and to the question of all parties joining the Congress. The gentleman who came to see me today told me you were better and that at the present moment the Bombay climate might be better for you than the rigorous climate of the Punjab. But you are the best judge as to whether you can move out just now or not. I would not have you to imperil your health for the sake of the conference.

M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

268. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJI

DELHI,
Kartik Vad 1 [*November 12, 1924*][1]

CHI. BHAI SHANTIKUMAR,

I got your invitation for Chi. Madhuri's marriage. May God grant long life to her and her husband and may all their aspirations be fulfilled.

Convey my regards to grandmother and father.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4697. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarji

[1] Gandhiji was at Delhi on 12-11-1924.

269. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

C/o Dr. Ansari,
Daryaganj,
Kartik Vad 1 [*November 12, 1924*][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I got your letter at Calcutta. I returned thence on Sunday. You need not worry about the mistakes in your letters to me. What if mistakes occur even in letters to persons of whatever status they be? Language is a medium for communication of thought. Everything is all right so long as there is nothing wrong in our thought. A demon sitting in an aeroplane is not worthy of our respect, but a sadhu sitting in a bullock cart is. Go to Hajira as soon as you can. I must leave for Bombay on the 18th. I shall have to stay there for about three days. I shall then proceed to the Ashram.

Blessings from
Bapu

Chi. Vasumati
C/o Messrs Strauss & Co.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 460. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

270. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD[2]

[On or after *November 12, 1924*]

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

TRY BE BOMBAY THURSDAY MORNING SELF REACHING THEN.

Gandhi

From a photostat: S.N. 11718

[1] From the postmark

[2] This and five identical telegrams to Konda Venkatappayya, C. Rajagopalachari, Jamnalal Bajaj, Gangadharrao Deshpande and Jairamdas Daulatram were sent after the receipt on November 12 of a telegram dated November 11 from Motilal Nehru which read: "Mahadev's letter. Too late to post invitations after consulting you and Das. Suggest your wiring associations named by Mahomed Ali inviting representatives also prominent individuals on behalf of yourself Das and me."

271. THE AGREEMENT

I thank God that He gave me strength to surrender to the Swarajists all that it was possible for me to surrender—much more than I or many friends had expected. I must acknowledge my indebtedness to the Swarajists for their accommodation. I know that many do not put the same emphasis that I do on the constructive part of the programme. With many the stiffening of the franchise was the bitterest pill and yet for the sake of unity and for the sake of the country they have yielded. All honour to them for so doing.

The agreement puts Swarajists on a par with the No-changers. It was inevitable if voting and all it means was to be avoided. Non-violence means utmost accommodation compatible with one's principles. Swarajists claim to be a growing body. That they have made an impression on the Government cannot be gainsaid. Opinions may differ as to its value but it is not possible to question the fact itself. They have shown determination, grit, discipline and cohesion and have not feared to carry their policy to the point of defiance. Once assume the desirability of entering Councils and it must be admitted that they have introduced a new spirit into the Indian Legislatures. That their very brilliance takes the nation's mind away from itself is to one like me regrettable, but so long as our ablest men continue to believe in Council-entry, we must make the best of the Legislatures. Though an uncompromising No-changer, I must not only tolerate their attitude and work with them, but I must even strengthen them wherever I can.

If they will not decide matters of important differences by means of the vote, the No-changers can carry on Congress work only by mutual consent and forbearance unless, not wishing to fight, they will retire from Congress control altogether. It is recognized that neither party can do without the other. Both occupy an important position in the country. The Congress was weakened by the secession of the Liberals and the Besantites. The cleavage was inevitable because they were opposed to non-co-operation on principle. We must avoid further cleavage if it is at all possible. We must not lightly set up as principle mere matters of opinion and engage in pitched battles over them.

If the non-co-operation programme is suspended, as I feel sure it must be, it follows as a natural corollary that the Swaraj

Party should have no odium attached to its activity. It is beside the purpose to say or examine what would have happened if the Congressmen had never thought of the Councils. We have to take the situation as it stands today and suit ourselves to it or make it suit us, if that is possible.

Lastly, the Bengal situation demanded that No-changers gave the Swaraj Party the strongest support that it was in their power to give.

"But", said some of the No-changers and others to me, "how can you subscribe to a document which says that the Government have really attacked the Swaraj Party and not the anarchists? Are you not unjust to the Government?" This attitude pleased me and flattered me. It pleased me to notice in my questioners a sincere desire to do justice to a government they do not like. It flattered my pride in that my questioners expected from me exact judgment and fullest justice. I confessed to them that I had against the Government the greatest prejudice based on past experience, that the writings in the British and British-owned Indian Press had prepared me for an attack on the Swaraj Party, that it was the declared policy of the Government to lop off "tall poppies" and that whilst it was possible that among the arrested there may be some with anarchical tendencies, it was nevertheless a fact that the vast majority of them were Swarajists and that if it was a fact, as the Government contended, that the anarchists were a large party, it was curious that the Government could find in the main only Swarajists to lay their hands upon. I told them further that if there was an extensive and active anarchical organization, the fiercest spirits were likely to be outside the Swaraj Party rather than inside it, that no arms, it is said, were found by the police during their night search. Nothing that my questioners told me in reply shook my belief and I am inclined to think that if I did not bring my questioners round to my belief, I at least convinced them that I had good grounds for my opinion and that the burden lay upon the Government to show that they had no designs upon the Swaraj Party in Bengal.

But the proposed suspension does not affect the individual non-co-operators. They are not only entitled to hold to their views but would be very little worth if they gave up their personal non-co-operation. For instance, suspension of the non-co-operation programme cannot mean for me recall of my medals or resumption of practice or sending my children to Government schools. Thus, whilst suspension will leave a convinced non-co-operator free to retain his non-co-operation, for those who took

up non-co-operation only as a policy and in obedience to the Congress call, it makes it open, if they like, to recall their non-co-operation without the slightest stigma attaching to their so doing. Further, if suspension is agreed upon it is not open to any Congressman as such to preach non-co-operation as part of the Congress policy or programme. On the other hand it is open to him if he so chooses to dissuade people from taking up non-co-operation during the period of suspension.

Then there is the spinning franchise. I wanted much more khaddar on all occasions and spinning 2,000 yards per month by all Congressmen except in case of illness or like disability. This has been watered down to wearing khaddar on political occasions and Congress business and spinning by deputy even for unwillingness. But here again it was not possible for me to insist up to the breaking point. In the first place the Maharashtra party had constitutional difficulty in agreeing to spinning or wearing khaddar being part of the franchise at all, and in the second place the Swaraj Party as a body does not attach the same importance either to the wearing of khaddar or to hand-spinning. It does not consider them to be indispensable as I do either for the attainment of swaraj or for the exclusion of foreign cloth. It was, therefore, from their standpoint, a tremendous concession to have agreed[1] to make khaddar and hand-spinning part of the franchise even in the modified form. I, therefore, gratefully acknowledge the concession they have made for the sake of unity. Let those who are disposed to grumble at the modification remember that it is a great advance to rise from the nominal four-anna franchise to a tangible and effective franchise that requires every Congressman to testify his belief in the desirability of making India self-supporting so far as her clothing requirements are concerned and that too by reviving the old Indian industry of hand-spinning and thus distributing wealth where it is most needed.

It has been urged that everybody will take advantage of the relaxation and the idea of spinning as sacrifice will break down and that the wearing of khaddar will be confined only to political occasions and Congress business. I should be sorry if such an untoward result were to follow the modification. Those who fear such disaster seem to forget that spinning by every Congressman was as yet a mere idea of one man. He has now resigned himself to a modification of his proposal. Surely, therefore, the embodiment in the franchise of the idea even in a modified form is a

[1] The source has "to their agreeing".

distinct gain and must increase the number of wearers of khaddar and voluntary spinners.

Moreover it must be remembered that it is one thing to embody reforms in recommendatory or even obligatory resolutions; it is totally another thing to make them part of franchise. Any test for franchise should have no vagueness about it and should be easily capable of being carried out. For, inability to carry it out means disfranchisement. The wearing of khaddar on all occasions and for all purposes may not be possible even for the best of us.

In practice, however, it will be found that the vast majority of us who can ill afford a variety of costumes will find it necessary to wear khaddar on all occasions, if we have to wear it on all Congress occasions. For an ardent Congressman every occasion is a Congress occasion and he or she would be an indifferent Congressman or Congresswoman who has no Congress work during consecutive twenty-four hours. We should have on our roll thousands of voters or original members. They cannot have many uniforms nor can they have money to buy yarn spun by others. They must spin themselves and thus give at least half an hour's labour to the nation. And a Congress volunteer who does not spin himself will be hard put to it to convince the candidates for Congress membership of the necessity of spinning. Everything must, therefore, rest on an honest and loyal working of the proposal.

The agreement is what it professes to be—a strong recommendation. I have signed it in my individual capacity. Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru have signed it for the Swaraj Party. It, therefore, is a recommendation by the Swaraj Party and myself to all Congressmen and others for consideration and adoption. I want it to be considered on merits. I would urge everyone to eliminate me from consideration. Unless the recommendation is accepted on merits it will be difficult either to achieve the political unity we want and should have or to secure the exclusion of foreign cloth which we must have and which is possible only by universal spinning and universal use of khaddar. If the proposals to suspend non-co-operation or to give the Swaraj Party adequate hearty recognition in the Congress or to make the wearing of khaddar and hand-spinning, whether personally or by deputy, part of the franchise do not commend themselves to the Congressmen and the others who are invited they should reject them and unhesitatingly press their own solution in the attention of the nation. Deep cherished convictions

cannot and must not be set aside from any consideration whatsoever.

Young India, 13-11-1924

272. NOTES ON THE AGREEMENT

How to Work

In these notes I propose to take up the agreement between the Swaraj Party and myself where I have left it in the leading article.[1] If our recommendation is accepted by the forthcoming meeting, it means revolutionizing the Congress organization and turning the members from being merely vote-registering machines once or twice a year into day-to-day workers and contributing materially to the chief national activity. It will make the Congress a huge manufacturing and receiving and distributing depot. The work cannot be organized without method, industry, punctuality, patriotism, self-sacrifice and strictest honesty and the required skill. Though anybody can become a Congress member by paying four annas till the Congress accepts the proposal, if the forthcoming meeting approves of the proposals every province must begin to organize as if the franchise was accepted by the Congress. That is to say, propaganda must be carried on among the existing members advising them of the proposed change and providing them with the necessary facility for learning spinning and procuring the wheel, etc. The question will have to be considered as to how the yarn is to be collected and how disposed of. Without any Congress resolution, save the one applicable to members of Congress executives, and by simple exhortation through these columns we have today over seven thousand men and women spinning voluntarily. Their number is on the increase. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that when and if the Congress accepts the franchise proposal we should be able to reach at least one hundred thousand in a few months. Assuming the average output of yarn to be 5 *tolas* of 20 counts per month per member it would mean 312.5 maunds of yarn per month or 12,500 dhotis or saris, 45 inches in width and 6 yards in length. And when we remember that labour on the material up to spinning is to be free the dhotis must compete with any similar article on the market. If only the nation could concentrate all effort on this one national work, exclusion of foreign cloth can be achieved

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

without the slightest difficulty and by means the most honourable and non-violent.

The Forthcoming Meeting

But all depends on the forthcoming meeting. It is to be a meeting not only of the A.I.C.C. but of representatives of all Provincial Committees and Associations. I hope that there will be a generous response on the part of these representatives to Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation. The joint meeting will have to decide not only the question of healing the breach in the Congress itself but also of inducing other distinguished leaders to join the Congress. The meeting has also to frame an effective policy in answer to the Bengal repression. Whatever our differences as to the method of reaching our goal, there are no two opinions about the desirability of ending the exercise of arbitrary powers.

There is no freedom for India so long as one man, no matter how highly placed he may be, holds in the hollow of his hands the life, property and honour of millions of human beings. It is an artificial, unnatural and uncivilized institution. The end of it is an essential preliminary to swaraj.

Our Helplessness

This is apparent. We seem to have lost all power beyond passing resolutions. But if we could all unite on the constructive programme, it will by itself be a step towards regaining self-confidence and power of action. It must be clear to everyone that if Hindus and Mussalmans regain their senses, if Hindus treat untouchables as their brothers and if we have so popularized spinning and khaddar as to be within easy reach of exclusion of foreign cloth, we should not need to do any more to command attention to our will. What is more we should need neither secret societies for the promotion of violence nor open non-violent disobedience. Such a desirable consummation can be effected only by united, determined and ceaseless pursuit of the constructive programme. That, therefore, is my method of effective reply to the volcanic eruption of repression or the chronic and helpless subordination of a whole nation.

Other Things?

Mr. Andrews drew my attention even during my fast to a note in the *Modern Review* expressing surprise at the omission from the constructive programme of the movement for abstinence from intoxicating drinks and drugs. Other friends drew attention much earlier to the omission of reference to national schools. I

may inform these friends that the constructive programme that forms part of the agreement contains only those items without which swaraj appears to me to be an impossibility. Unaided and unaffiliated national schools are there and they must be maintained. They help us to carry the programme through. A drink and drugs reform is silently but surely going on. It cannot be given up. One sees no excitement about it because we have done away with picketing as it led to violence. Nor for that matter are we going to give up the idea of promoting private arbitrations. Only, none of these things is absolutely essential for achieving swaraj in the sense in which the three items included in the agreement are. Nor is there any difference of opinion among national workers on these as there is on the three items. In mentioning national schools and private arbitration in the same breath as the drink and drugs reform, I do not wish to be understood to give the same value to them. The drink and drugs reform is a problem of the highest national importance. If by any honest means we could be wholly free today from the drink and the opium evils, I should adopt and advise them now. But we have no such heroic remedy. Apart from picketing we are powerless to deal with the evil, root and branch, till we have an effective voice in the Government of the country. Happily, bad as the evil is, it is not national vice. It is confined to a small though unfortunately growing minority. Hence there would be no opposition to liquor or opium prohibition, if we had the power. It is the Government that comes in the way of the nation becoming free from the drink and the drug curse. Not that we shall ever make drinkers sober by legislation. But we can and ought to penalize the drink and the drug habit and by closing all liquor and opium shops and dens make it as difficult as possible to indulge in it.

Is It Compulsion?

The reader must have read Mr. Stokes' passionate protest against hand-spinning being made compulsory for every Congress member. It is evident to me that his excessive regard for liberty of the individual has disabled him from distinguishing between voluntary acceptance and compulsion. Compulsion means submission of protestants to the thing they oppose under pain of being fined or imprisoned. They cannot escape the obligation or the penalty by remaining outside the corporation of which they find themselves members. But when a man joins a voluntary association such as the Congress he does so willingly

and tacitly or explicitly undertakes to obey its rules. These rules generally include submission of the minority to the wishes of the majority. The voluntary nature of every act of every member is clear from the fact that he can secede whenever the majority pass a rule which is in conflict with his conscience. Mr. Stokes' reasoning is subversive of all corporate self-government. Every franchise has some condition attached to it. As a rule there is opposition from some to every form of restrictive franchise. May the opposers consider the restriction carried by the majority compulsion? Obviously not. For if they may, then there can never be any corporate activity.

When the new Congress creed was passed in 1920, there was a minority that opposed it on principle and therefore seceded when it was carried by a majority. Under the old creed many more were kept out because they could not conscientiously subscribe to it. In either case I hold that the majority had a right to pass the rules. Whether in the one case the restriction was wise and in the other relaxation was unwise is a matter of opinion. And so in the matter of the present proposal to make hand-spinning part of the Congress franchise may be bad policy and may kill the very object that I have in view, but I submit that there is nothing inherently wrong in it, that it is not wrong in principle, that it is an unconscious misuse of language to call it compulsion. On merits I have no misgivings. If hand-spinning is an effective method of making India self-supporting it must be made part of the franchise. It is the best way of expressing national will and determination.

Young India, 13-11-1924

273. NOTES

Public Debts

A correspondent writes:

> You may be aware that a resolution, moved by Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar in the open Congress at Gaya in the year 1922 regarding the repudiation of public debts that might be incurred by the Government of India after 31-12-'22, was passed. It is needless to state that many responsible men in the public life of our country are eager to know your views on the resolution.

I am sorry to have to confess my ignorance of the resolution in question. But now that it has been brought to my notice, I

have no hesitation in approving of it. I congratulate both Mr. Rajagopalachari and the Congress upon the passage of that resolution. We may be, as we are, powerless today, but the world should know what we think of the wasteful and enormous expenditure of India's money. The late Lord Salisbury called it a process of bleeding. I should imagine that any swaraj scheme would include an impartial inquiry into the commitments of the Government of India or the India Office and an insistence upon a readjustment of the financial transactions of the outgoing Government. I therefore regard the resolution as both necessary and honourable. It may excite ridicule today. But, when we come to our own, we should be able to point with pride to the fact of our having given due notice. For, in spite of all I have said about the limitations of the Congress, who can deny that it is the most representative of the nation? It is for us to make it so representative as to command respect and attention.

A National Loss

Many readers of *Young India* know Sjt. Dalbahadur Giri by name only. Some may not have even heard his name. Yet he was one of the bravest of national workers. As I am writing for *Young India* I have a wire from Kalimpong advising me of the death of this comparatively unknown patriot. I tender my condolence to his family. He was a cultured Gurkha and was doing good work among the Gurkhas in and near Darjeeling. During 1921, in common with the thousands, he was also imprisoned for his non-co-operation activities. He became seriously ill during his imprisonment. He was discharged only a few months ago. He leaves I understand a large family destitute of means of livelihood. An appeal was published on his behalf in the Bengali Press. I hope that the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee will find out all the facts about the late Sjt. Dalbahadur Giri's family and render such aid as may be necessary.

Young India, 13-11-1924

274. REMARKS IN SCHOOL VISITORS' BOOK

DELHI,
November 13, 1924

I am happy to visit this "Modern School". Its cleanliness and tidy up-keep is commendable. I have only one apprehension: if this upsurge of modernism destroys our ancient values, it will be a great loss to the young men and women of our country. I venture to voice this fear because I see a sincerity of purpose in the creation of this institution and wish it all progress.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

275. LETTER TO COL. MEL

AS AT SABARMATI,
November 13, 1924

DEAR COL. MEL,

Mr. Pragji K. Desai[1] whom I know well and who was with me in South Africa is at present a prisoner in the Hyderabad Central Jail. He was convicted some time ago at Surat under section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code.

I am told that

1. Mr. Desai has lost in weight,

2. he is isolated from the rest of the prisoners and has therefore no human contact save that of his keepers,

3. the greens he gets are said to be as a rule grassy and uneatable,

4. he has applied for permission to spin cotton but he is permitted only to twist prepared yarn. If the authorities are not prepared to supply Mr. Desai with slivers, I can arrange for such supply if permitted.

Rather than publish the above information in the Press, I am passing it on to you for kind inquiry. I may state that

[1] Editor of the *Navayug*, Surat

Mr. Desai is a vegetarian and did not possess a robust constitution by any means when he was outside. In my opinion therefore he needs a light but nourishing diet such as milk and baker's bread.

I am,
Yours truly,

From a photostat: S.N. 11721

276. LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND[1]

November 13, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind letter. Miss Slade[2] arrived a little later. What a treasure you have sent me. I shall try to be worthy of such a great confidence. I shall do everything to help Miss Slade to become a little bridge between West and East. I am too imperfect to have a disciple. She will be my companion in my research (for truth) and as I am older and consequently more advanced in spiritual experience, I propose to share with you the honour of your paternity. Miss Slade shows a marvellous capacity for adaptation and we are already quite at ease with her. I leave Miss Slade to tell you the rest by asking her to speak to you of a French sister who has arrived at the Ashram just a few days before her.

From a copy: C.W. 8849. Courtesy: R.K. Prabhu

277. SPEECH AT RAMJAS COLLEGE, DELHI

November 13, 1924

Mahatmaji then addressed the students, sitting as usual. He excused himself for having come much earlier than the appointed time, the reason for which, he said, was that he had to attend the funeral of Bi-Amma. He advised the students not to follow his example in that respect but to cultivate the habit of time-sense. He referred to the wonderful punctuality of Gokhale. He said that Indians very much lacked the virtue of punctuality which should be specially cultivated.

[1] 1866-1944; French writer and pacifist
[2] Mirabehn

He then referred to R. S. Kidar Nath's great sacrifice for the college and regretted that he could not visit the college before, when he was invited by Principal Gidwani some time back. He had wondered why Rai Sahib Kidar Nath established the college on a hill away from the city. When it was explained to him by Sukumar Babu on the way that the founder's ideal was *brahmacharya* and that he wanted to keep the students away from the attractions of cinemas and theatres, he was convinced. *Brahmacharya* is inherent in Hindu civilization, and Western civilization lacks it. It might be said the people of the West had prospered, but he would ask what was the age of their civilization. Egypt, Babylon, Greece and other great civilizations had perished, but Indian civilization still lives. The reason for it was, he said, that Indian civilization has what they had not, viz., *brahmacharya.*

He then quoted a verse from the *Bhagavata* about the control of the tongue. By control of the tongue he meant control of diet and speech. This he specially enjoined upon the students.

He next spoke about good company. His advice was that every student should strive to keep company with the best books and the best thoughts of the world. While he was a student, a class-fellow of his recommended to him to read Reynolds' novels, but he never read them in his life. "Non-co-operate with all that is bad", said Mahatmaji.

He concluded by referring to the efficacy of prayer. He said that he had felt it specially while he was in jail. When the mind is full of prayerful thoughts, everything in the world seems good and agreeable. Prayer is essential for progress in life. The name of Rama or *Khuda* is sure to banish all evil thoughts and give new strength and energy.

He said he was still very weak and was not in a mood to speak more.

He left the college at about 3.30 p.m. amidst showers of flowers and shouts of *Vandemataram* and *Mahatma Gandhiki jai.*

The Hindustan Times, 15-11-1924

278. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[After *November 13, 1924*][1]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

What about the suit filed by Brahmachari against Dr. Mehta and Avantikabehn?

Can we not have a carding-bow working eight hours [a day]? Would Tulsi Mehar, Navin and others who are good carders join in this? We should be in a position to make a fairly good quantity of slivers by ourselves. This matter was altogether left out of our talk.

Dalbahadur Giri has expired. He has left behind a helpless widow and children, whom he had asked to go to us. I have sent word that the widow may come. We shall have to support them. Yesterday there was a telegram from her saying she was willing to come over if her fare could be arranged for. I have wired back saying that she should get it from Dasbabu. In case she arrives there during my absence, you may have to face some difficulty. If she comes, please accommodate her.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6195. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

279. MESSAGE TO "WORLD TOMORROW"[2]

DELHI,
November 14, 1924

TO
THE "WORLD TOMORROW"
396, BROADWAY
NEW YORK
U. S. A.

My study and experience of non-violence have proved to me that it is the greatest force in the world. It is the surest method of discovering the truth and it is the quickest because there is no other. It works silently, almost imperceptibly, but none the less

[1] From the reference to the death of Dalbahadur Giri; *vide* "Notes", 13-11-1924, sub-title, "A National Loss".

[2] Of December 1924, which was "A Gandhi Number"

/. It is the one constructive process of Nature in the midst cessant destruction going on about us. I hold it to be a stition to believe that it can work only in private life. There department of life public or private to which that force it be applied. But this non-violence is impossible without lete self-effacement.

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

280. LETTER TO R. SHARMA

SABARMATI,
November 14, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

Will you please supply me as early as possible with the figures on the following when non-co-operation was at its height and now?

The number of titles given up.

The number of boys and girls leaving Government schools and colleges.

The number of suspensions of practice.

The number of spinning-wheels at work.

The quantity of hand-spun khaddar produced.

The number of handlooms.

The number of national schools and colleges with attendance of boys and girls.

The nature and volume of work done among untouchables.

The nature and quantity of temperance (liquor and opium work) done.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 11723

281. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

Kartik Vad 3 [November 14, 1924][1]

BHAISHRI KAKA[2],

After writing an article[3] for the *Kelavani* issue I have started thinking more about children's education. Can't we try it on the Ashram children? That is, if the ideas stated there appeal to you. A child calls a pot a pot, but he does not draw a picture of it. Similarly he may read the alphabet but may not draw pictures of the letters. A child hears a new word before he reads it and he pronounces it or rather repeats it as he hears it. Why shouldn't we stop Lakshmi, Rasik and the other children from writing and teach them first to draw? Could we not give them a good many things orally? Just now they should use the hand for drawing only. For this the teacher should know the rudiments of drawing. I am now going deeper into the subject and hence stop here. For the present just think over it. More when we meet.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

282. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

November 14/15, 1924

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

Swami wires he is sending me your scathing indictment of the agreement. Let this be as balm to your lacerated heart. I must convert or be converted or retire. Bardoli was the boldest experiment in non-violence in one direction. The agreement is the boldest experiment in non-violence in another direction. I do not regret Bardoli because I had the courage to retrace my steps. I hope I shall have less reason to regret this step. Perhaps my

[1] As given in the source

[2] Dattatreya Balakrishna Kalelkar (b. 1885); educationist, writer and constructive worker; a close associate of Tagore and Gandhiji; Padma Vibhushan

[3] *Vide* "A Way", 20-10-1924.

article in *Young India* will soothe you a bit. I wish you had come to Bombay. But I will not press.

You will see V. G. Desai's translation of the *History of Satyagraha in South Africa* published in *Current Thought*[1]. Please read and send your criticism of the translation to V. G. Desai, Shahibag, Ahmedabad, or to me. Hope you are well. Cheer, boys, Cheer. No more of idle sorrow.

Yours,
M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

283. *LETTER TO J. B. KRIPALANI*

November 15, 1924

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

Kishorelal has shot at me the bomb you have fired. I am unaffected by the reasons which he and others thought had really actuated you in firing the bomb. He has now withdrawn that part of the letter and apologized. So that chapter is closed. In any case I know you too well to misunderstand you. Many things act upon us against our wills and unconsciously. It is therefore always unsafe to go behind the written word and try to read men's minds. I therefore take the reason for your resignation partly what you have given, and therefore I want to tell you that you should have written to me before resigning; you should have talked to Banker[2]. I had forgotten all about Banaras because he had, I imagined, taken over the burden off my shoulders. I have transferred your letter to him and would like you to see him and discuss with him the whole situation. This means of course that it is the financial burden that is preying upon your mind and not the administrative regarding Banaras.

Tell Kikibehn I always think of her. I hope to meet her soon and to find her as cheerful as ever if not stronger and better in body.

Yours,
BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] A monthly published by S. Ganesan, Madras

[2] Shankerlal Banker; social worker and labour leader; associated with *The Bombay Chronicle* and Satyagraha Sabha, Bombay; printer and publisher of *Young India*

284. *LETTER TO SWAMIJI*

Kartik Vad 4, November 15, 1924

SWAMIJI,

I have your three questions.

1. If commercialized, the power of *tapasya* ceases to be.

2. *Yajna* is performed for acquiring strength. Hence external protection is necessary while it is in progress.

3. In the account of Rama's exploits, I have found nothing to show that he gained victory through physical strength.

4. In the story of Krishna, many things are of an allegorical nature. There is evidence only of soul-force, not of physical force.

Even today we see that the power of the intellect surpasses the strength of the body; but both these appear insignificant before soul-force.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

285. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

November 16, 1924

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Just a line to wish you many happy returns of the day for the service of the motherland and for self-realization.

If it is possible do come with Father.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 41

286. *STATEMENT ON KOHAT*[1]

DELHI,
November 16, 1924

Mr. Gandhi has issued the following statement regarding the visit to Rawalpindi and the settlement of the Kohat question:

I have seen references in the Press asking me to go to Rawalpindi to meet the refugees from Kohat. I have also had messages to the same effect from them directly. I am extremely sorry that I am unable at the present moment to respond to the call. My health is not such as yet to bear the strain of continuous journies, and I dare not postpone my visit to Bombay to attend the forthcoming conference in connection with Bengal repression. I hope, however, immediately on my return from Bombay, to proceed to Rawalpindi. Meanwhile, I wish to give my assurance to the refugees that they have never been out of my mind. As soon after the fast as I was able to move about a little, I made all preparations to go to Kohat and applied for permission to proceed there. Had I been permitted, it would have been my first duty to go there in the company of some Hindu and Mussalman friends. I felt that I could then have rendered useful service, and in company with the friends, contributed my humble share towards reconciliation between the Hindus and Mussalmans of Kohat. But, my visit to Kohat having been prohibited, I did not feel that a visit to Rawalpindi would serve any useful purpose. I knew that many friends were assisting the refugees and that Pandit Malaviyaji was giving special attention to them, and even though, in obedience to the call from the refugees, as already stated, I shall go to Rawalpindi, I realize that, beyond giving comfort to the refugees, I might be of little service. This much, however, I shall venture to urge upon the attention of the refugees, that the Kohat question is an all-India question. Both the Hindus and Mussalmans of India are interested in a proper, honourable and correct solution. Any settlement, therefore, that they may agree to, should be viewed from a national as distinguished from a parochial standpoint, and they would be well advised before accepting any settlement to secure the approval of Hindu

[1] *Young India*, 20-11-1924, published this under "Notes" with the sub-title "Kohat Refugees".

and Mussalman leaders. Indeed, I will venture respectfully to tender the same advice to the Government. I am glad to observe that they have repudiated the terms of the settlement said to have been offered by them. The Government have declared themselves in favour of unity. It would be an earnest of good faith if they would take the public into confidence and secure public approval of any terms of settlement that they might propose for the acceptance of the two communities.

New India, 17-11-1924

287. MESSAGE TO TAMILNAD CONFERENCE, TIRUVANNAMALAI

[Before *November 17, 1924*]

I hope the Conference will understand and appreciate the agreement between the Swarajists and myself in my individual capacity. Proper appreciation of non-violence will give the key to understanding the agreement. Non-co-operation is left untouched by the agreement. In any event, I hope the Conference will result in a greater use of khaddar.[1]

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 19-11-1924

288. LETTER TO SATISH CHANDRA MUKERJEE

November 17, 1924

DEAR SATISH BABU,

I have replied to your wire. You must be the best judge as to what Kristodas should do. You know my views on promises. Kristodas had definitely decided to come here on or before 18th. If it was humanly possible he should have fulfilled it. But I recognize that no promise not made by him through you or approved by you can be finally binding on him. I entertain very high notions about the relations between master and disciple. Therefore I had no hesitation in wiring you as I did. I know that Kristodas's welfare depends on his implicit obedience to you. I dare not therefore interpose myself between you and him. He must come to me when you send him—for me I do want him. I feel morally certain that the present mood is due to over-sensitiveness.

[1] The Conference, held on November 17, endorsed the agreement and stressed the need to wear khaddar.

I reach Bombay on 20th, stay there probably till 23rd, pass the end of the month at Sabarmati and reach Rawalpindi on 3rd or 4th December.

I use your oil daily and think of you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5606

289. LETTER TO LAJPAT RAI

November 17, 1924

MY DEAR LALAJI,

I have your letter and your messages through Bharucha and Lala Amirchand. You will, I hope, forgive me for not responding to your call. I have now publicly given the reasons for my inability. There are moments when health has not only to be risked but sacrificed. I did not feel that there was such a moment. I eat well, I sleep well, walk a bit, can travel to Bengal, am travelling to Bombay. I know that travelling to Rawalpindi would not have killed me. And death on the battlefield is welcome to a soldier. But was it worth while? I know my limitations. I am a surgeon and not a physician. The refugees will not submit to the surgical knife. At least that is my fear, and if they will, I know that a few days only will not matter, but probably they will be only then ready for the knife. Meanwhile they need merely watching and musing and probably a little cleansing and a little tonic. So much for Rawalpindi. . . .[1]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] The rest of the letter is not given in the source.

290. LETTER TO AMIRCHAND C. BOMBWAL

[Before *November 18, 1924*][1]

DEAR FRIEND,

Though I think we have never met personally I know you through Pandit Malaviyaji. He spoke to me of you in glowing language and told me how brave, honest and self-sacrificing you were. He told me also that you counted your health of no cost in serving the refugees. This is however to tell you, and through you the refugees, how sorry I am that I cannot come to Rawalpindi at the present moment. My objective was Kohat. That having fallen through for the time being, I was in no hurry to go to Rawalpindi. I knew also that Panditji was in close touch with you and I knew also that I could be of little assistance in bringing about reconciliation unless I could go to Kohat and that too in proper company. But I see that my presence is considered necessary even in Rawalpindi, but it has not been possible. I will, however, come at the first opportunity and not later than the first week of December. I dare not delay my departure for Bombay. Meanwhile I would like to give you my own opinion on the situation as I understand it from this distance. The Kohat situation should be treated as an all-India question. For the whole of India is interested in what happens to the refugees. The latter should therefore inform the Government that they would be guided by the advice that they may receive from Hindu and Mohammedan leaders and that therefore the Government should invite them and settle the matter through them. I hope that the refugees will not be frightened by threats of arrests and the like. I am hoping that Panditji and Lalaji will be with you tomorrow or the day after. You may place this letter before them, and if they do not agree with my opinion, it should be dismissed from your minds. If Panditji and Lalaji disagree you need not place my opinion before the refugees at all.

I am,
Yours sincerely,

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] From the reference to Gandhiji's departure for Bombay

291. *LETTER TO RAJA OF KANIKA*

As at Sabarmati,
November 18, 1924

DEAR RAJA SAHIB,

I thank you for your letter[1] of [October 25, 1924] and for your kind wishes. I have read the reply to the note prepared by my secretary from the documents in my possession. The only satisfactory way to deal with the matter is for me or someone on my behalf to go to the Raj territory and make a personal investigation so as to enable one to speak or write with authority on the subject. Whilst I was thinking of writing to you in this strain, I had the following from Mr. Andrews who, as you may be aware, has been helping me in editing *Young India* ever since the fast. The cutting was sent for publication but Mr. Andrews would not publish it without reference to me. On reading it, I decided to send it to you before publishing. Meanwhile I observe that other newspapers have published the news already. If you do not mind I would like to send Mr. Andrews to you so that he can see things for himself. He tells me he knows you very well and has kindly consented to go there. If Mr. Andrews goes he will be able to smooth matters and enable you to deal with such abuse, if any, as may exist and enable me to satisfy those who are constantly complaining to me of oppression of the ryot. Will you please wire your reply at Sabarmati to my proposal to send Mr. Andrews?

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 11733

[1] S. N. 15932

292. *NOTES*

Bi-amma

It is difficult to think of Bi-Amma as dead. Who does not know the stately figure of Bi-Amma or her voice at public gatherings? Though old in years, she possessed the energy of youth. She travelled ceaselessly in the cause of the Khilafat and swaraj. A staunch follower of Islam, she realized that the cause of Islam, in so far as it depended on human effort, depended upon the freedom of India. She realized with equal conviction that freedom of India was impossible without Hindu-Muslim unity and khaddar. She therefore ceaselessly preached unity which had become an article of faith with her. She had discarded all her foreign or mill-made clothing and taken to khaddar. Maulana Mahomed Ali tells me she had enjoined upon him that on her death she should have nothing but khaddar. Whenever I had the privilege of going to her bedside, her inquiry was about swaraj and unity. The inquiry was invariably followed by the prayer that God might grant wisdom to Hindus and Mussalmans to understand the necessity of unity and that He may in His mercy let her live to see swaraj established. The best way in which we can treasure the memory of this brave and noble soul is to imitate her in her zeal for the common cause. Hinduism without unity and swaraj is as much in peril as Islam. Would that Hindus and Mussalmans had the common sense of Bi-Amma to appreciate this elementary fact. God grant her soul peace and the Ali Brothers strength to continue the mission bequeathed to them.

I must not omit to mention the impressive and solemn scene that I had the good fortune to witness on the night of Bi-Amma's death. Having heard that life was ebbing away in her, Sarojini Devi and I hurried to her bedside. She was surrounded by many members of the family. Dr. Ansari, the friend and physician of the family, was also in attendance. I heard no sobbing, though I noticed tears trickling down Maulana Mahomed Ali's cheeks. The Big Brother restrained himself with difficulty, though there was an unusual solemnity about his face. They were all chanting the name of Allah. One friend was reciting the last prayers. The *Comrade* Press was situated within earshot of Bi-Amma's bedroom. But the work was not interrupted for a single moment. Nor did the Maulana interrupt his own editorial duties. Indeed no essential public duty was suspended. Maulana Shaukat Ali would not dream

of my postponing my visit to the Ramjas College. And like a good soldier he kept the appointment he had made with the Hindus of Muzaffarnagar although he had to proceed there almost immediately after Bi-Amma's death. All this was as it should have been. Birth and death are not two different states, but they are different aspects of the same state. There is as little reason to deplore the one as there is to be pleased over the other.

Late Parsi Rustomjee

A cable received from Durban from his son gives me the sad news of the death of Rustomjee Jiwanjee Ghorkhodoo. For me it is a personal loss. He was a valued client, dear friend and faithful co-worker. He was as true a Parsi as he was a true Indian. He was an equally true man. He was an orthodox Parsi, but his Zoroastrianism was as broad as humanity itself. He befriended all without distinction. He could act pleasingly towards officials, but he could be unbending when the occasion demanded it. His word was as good as his bond. He was brave as a lion. He was chary of making promises, but if he made them, he strove his best to keep them. After he declared himself a satyagrahi, he never swerved even during the darkest hours of the movement, not even when the end seemed never to be coming. When he took the pledge, he was by no means a young man. Nor was he untrammelled by business preoccupations. But he never counted the cost. He suffered losses without a murmur. He gave almost beyond his means and yet never unthinkingly. His charities were most catholic. He gave donations for mosques, madrasas, national schools. Many a young man owed his rise to Parsi Rustomjee, as he was called throughout South Africa. Personally I owe much to him. I have many friends in South Africa. But I have not known a warmer one. He harboured me when I was lynched. His house was a place of refuge for me and mine. People wonder why I am partial to Parsis. I am not partial, but I am thankful that I can bear testimony to their admirable virtues. So long as the memory of Parsi Rustomjee persists with me, so long will that portion of humanity claim my respectful admiration. If we had many Rustomjees in our public life, we should not be long in reaching our cherished goal. May his soul rest in peace, and may God give wisdom and strength to his two sons to follow in the footsteps of their noble father!

Superstitious Practice

The following extract from a letter recently received by me will cause pain to the reader as it has to me:

> I am here in the very heart of the jungle villages where 90 per cent of the Gonds are living. While touring I happened to come to a village named Silagota in Dangargarh Tahsil of the Khairagarh estate of Chattisgarh Division in the Central Provinces. On Sunday last there was a great gathering from the surrounding villages. Many of them had come from a distance perhaps of more than 15 miles. I inquired into the cause of the gathering and came to know that for the past two years they had been enjoying every Sunday as a Gandhi day. On that day they do not work at all. Some men or women in the congregation are supposed to be visited by your spirit and are said to be inspired. They tell fortunes and promise children to barren women. I know this news will pain you. Can you not send one of your workers to stop this practice? If this practice of worshipping you is not stopped now, I think the day is not far off when they will actually place an idol of you in a *mandir* and commence worshipping you.

There is already enough superstition in our country. No effort should be spared to resist further addition in the shape of Gandhi worship. Personally I have a horror of all adoration. I believe in adoring virtue apart from the wearer. And that can be done only after the wearer's death. Form is nothing. It is perishable. Virtue persists and incarnates in one person or another. The poor Gonds know nothing of me or my mission. I know I have no power to give any person anything. The very idea of my spirit visiting and possessing any person is repugnant to me. The practice can only do harm and lead to fraud. I urge co-workers to put down the worship the correspondent describes. It is a sin to let simple folk such as the Gonds to be encouraged in the practice of superstition.

The Forthcoming Punjab Conference

Mr. Bharucha, who is fast becoming a specialist as khadi vendor, after a successful selling tour in the Punjab complained to me that the khadi sales were likely to be interrupted by the excitement and preparations for the conference that is to take place early next month. I should have hoped otherwise. Preparations for conferences should always mean more demand for khadi. It should be specially so in the Punjab. When khadi had practically died out in other parts of India, the Punjab was still manufacturing and using khadi. And today the Punjab is finding it difficult to use the khadi it manufactures. Let me hope that I shall not have to witness the humiliating spectacle of the conference *pandal* filled with men and women dressed in foreign or even mill-made cloth. The Punjabis should prove Mr. Bharucha's fears to be unjustified.

Young India, 20-11-1924

293. ON TRIAL

It is not to be wondered at that No-changers are intensely dissatisfied with the agreement arrived at between the Swarajists and myself. I have repeatedly admitted that I am but an humble explorer of the science of non-violence. Its hidden depths sometimes stagger me just as much as they stagger fellow-workers. I observe that the agreement seems just now to satisfy no one but the parties to it. Many Englishmen regard it as an ignominous surrender to the Swarajists on my part. Many No-changers regard it as a lapse, if not a betrayal. A friend says that it has caused consternation among students. Why, they ask, should they remain in national schools if non-co-operation is suspended? They are the greatest sufferers and they have not been considered in the pact at all. I hold a letter from an Andhra friend which arrests attention and calls for a reasoned reply.

Surrender on my part it undoubtedly is. It is a conscious surrender, but not, as an English paper puts it, to the party of violence. I refuse to believe that the Swaraj Party is a party of violence. Such charges were I know levelled against even the late Dadabhai Naoroji and Justice Ranade. They were suspected and shadowed. Lala Harkishen Lal who had no more to do with any party of violence than Sir Michael O'Dwyer himself was arrested and imprisoned by that satrap. I would have been false to the country if I had not stood by the Swaraj Party in the hour of its need. Let it be unequivocally demonstrated that it has had anything to do with violence, and I shall be prepared to denounce it in as strong language as is open to me to use. On such proof I shall sever all connection with it. But till then, I must stand by it even though I do not believe in the efficacy of Council-entry or even some of the methods of conducting Council-warfare.

But recognition of the party as an integral part of the Congress does not mean surrender by individuals of their non-co-operation. It means an admission that the Swaraj Party is a strong and growing wing of the Congress. And if it refuses to take a back seat without a fight, and if it is necessary or even expedient to avoid a fight, the claim to a definite official recognition is irresistible. Every Congressman, however, is not, by reason of his being a Congressman, assumed to be a believer in all the items of a Congress programme. My own position, I admit, is somewhat different.

I have made myself instrumental in bringing the agreement into being. I am not sorry for it. Rightly or wrongly, the country expects me to give it some guidance. And I have come to the conclusion that it is in the interest of the country to give the Swaraj party the fullest possible chance of working out its programme without let or hindrance from No-changers. The latter are not bound to participate in its activity, if they do not like it. They are free and bound, as the Swarajists are bound, to pursue the constructive programme only. They are free also to retain their individual non-co-operation. But suspension by the Congress means that non-co-operators can derive no support or strength from the Congress. They must derive all their strength from within. And that is their test and trial. If their faith abides, it is well with them and non-co-operation. If it vanishes with suspension, non-co-operation dies as a force in public life. But a friend says: "If you waver, what about lesser men?" I have not wavered. My faith in non-co-operation is as bright as ever. For it has been with me a principle of life for over thirty years. But I cannot impose my personal faith on others, never on a national organization. I can but try to convince the nation of its beauty and usefulness. And if I find in reading the national mind, that the nation in so far as it is represented by the Congress must have breathing time, I must cry halt. I may misread the mind of the Congress. When that happens, I shall cease to be any force in the Congress. That will be no calamity. But it would be a calamity if by my obstinacy I stand in the way of the country's progress by other means, so long as they are not positively mischievous and harmful. I should for instance rise, even if I was alone, against methods of actual violence. But I have recognized that the nation has the right, if it so wills, to vindicate her freedom even by actual violence. Only, then India ceases to be the land of my love even though she be the land of my birth, even as I should take no pride in my mother if she went astray. But the Swaraj Party is a party of orderly progress. It may not swear by non-violence as I do, but it accepts non-violence as a policy and it discountenances violence, because it considers it to be useless if not even harmful. It occupies a prominent position in the Congress. I do not know that if its strength was tested, it might not be found even to occupy a predominant position. It is easy enough for me to secede from the Congress and let the party run the Congress. That I can and will do when I find that I have nothing in common with the party. But so long as I have the faintest hope of its redemption, I shall cling to it like a child to

its mother's breast. I will not weaken it by disowning or denouncing it or by retiring from the Congress.

I have used the word "redemption" in no offensive sense. I have too my method of *shuddhi* and *tabligh*. It is the best the world has yet seen. Conscious of my own ground and strength, I let the party act upon me and influence me as much as it will. It enables me to know it at its best. I make no secret of my intention that by coming under its influence, I hope to influence it in favour of my method. If in the process, it redeems me and converts me, all honour to it. I should then declare my conversion from the house-top. It is *shuddhi* by reason appealing to reason and heart speaking to heart. It is the non-violent method of conversion. Let non-co-operators join forces with me. At the same time let them remain firm in their individual conduct. If their non-co-operation springs from love, I promise that they will convert the Swarajists, and even if they don't succeed, they will have lost nothing, personally. If the country is with them, the Swarajists, if they do not follow, will naturally take a back seat. And if the latter gain ground during the twelve months of grace, they must be undisputed masters of the Congress, and non-co-operators must be content to be in a minority. They may register me in advance as one of that minority.

The problem with the students is the same. Non-co-operation may be suspended, but schools will not be suspended. They are an accomplished fact. They are among the best fruit of non-co-operation. The students are therefore expected to keep the flag flying and show to the country that they can flourish even though the Congress may suspend the non-co-operation programme. It is poor faith that needs fair weather for standing firm. That alone is true faith that stands the foulest weather.

Young India, 20-11-1924

294. MESSAGE TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

[Before *November 21, 1924*]

There is no swaraj without the spinning-wheel.

The Bombay Chronicle, 21-11-1924

295. *SPEECH AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING, BOMBAY*

November 21, 1924

The Working Committee of the Congress met on November 21 at 8.30 a.m. in Gandhiji's house. The following members were present:

Mahomed Ali, M. K. Gandhi, Shaukat Ali, Dr. Ansari, Konda Venkatappayya, G. B. Deshpande, Vallabhbhai J. Patel and S. G. Banker.

After disposing of unimportant items of a routine and administrative character on the agenda, the Working Committee of the Congress resumed discussion on items 2 and 3 of the agenda, viz., (1) to consider present political situation in the country and (2) the programme to be placed before the Congress.

Gandhiji suggested that there being no two opinions on that question, it would be in the fitness of things to place before that conference a resolution which should be acceptable to all the parties in the conference. He argued that if they handled other questions such as the creed of the Congress and the spinning franchise there might arise disagreement which would be prejudicial to the main object of calling the conference. Gandhiji therefore suggested that instead of taking a hazardous step of placing a resolution drafted by the Working Committee they should ask the conference to appoint a representative committee to deal with the repressive policy of the Government of India. The members of the Working Committee unanimously agreed to this suggestion.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1924, p. 753

296. *SPEECH AT ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE, BOMBAY*

November 21, 1924

Mr. Gandhi, being called upon to move the first resolution on the Bengal Ordinance, moved instead for the appointment of a representative committee to draft the final resolution to be placed before the conference next day:

> It is resolved that a small committee containing the leaders of the several parties represented at the Conference be appointed forthwith to prepare and draft a resolution for submission to the Conference with reference to the repressive measures adopted by the Government of Bengal, with the concurrence and approval of the Government of India, the Committee to report to the Chairman at or before 10 p.m.[1]

Mr. Gandhi said:

[1] This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22-11-1924.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In response to the invitation issued by Maulana Mahomed Ali, we have met here in order to consider certain things, one of which, and perhaps the most pressing, is to advise some action which should be taken by this Conference, if it is at all possible, in connection with the repressive policy adopted by the Government of Bengal with the concurrence and approval of the Government of India. It was the desire of those who are associated with Mr. Mahomed Ali and the Working Committee as well as the members of the Swarajya Party that there should be a resolution on the repressive policy arrived at by the different parties represented here, and that the resolution should be passed unanimously.[1] We have gathered here, not to emphasize the points of difference ("Hear, hear!"), but to find points of agreement ("Hear, hear!") and to see whether it is possible for us to come together and work together in connection with these points of agreement. One of these points is with reference to the extraordinary ordinance in Bengal and the action taken under Regulation III of 1818. So far as I am aware, there is a consensus of opinion to arrive at some decision which will be representative of all parties represented in this hall. Unfortunately, I have not been able to consult the heads of the different parties that have arrived here. I had the pleasure and honour of waiting on Mrs. Besant. I have not

[1] The resolution as finally adopted the next day by the conference read:

(a) While firmly of the opinion that anarchical organizations can never secure swaraj to the people of India, and while disapproving and condemning most emphatically such organizations, if any, this Conference, representing all classes and communities of India and every variety of political opinion, views with the strongest disapproval and condemns the action of the Governor-General in promulgating the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance of 1924, as such an extraordinary measure, being a direct invasion upon individual liberty, should not have been enacted without the sanction of the Legislature, and as it easily lends itself at the hands of the Executive to grave abuses resulting in implicating innocent persons and interfering with constitutional political activity, as past experience of similar measures has repeatedly demonstrated.

(b) This Conference urges the immediate withdrawal of the Ordinance and the trial, if necessary, and in accordance with the ordinary law, of the persons detained under it.

(c) This Conference further urges that Regulation III of 1818, which gives the Government powers of arresting and confining persons suspected of crimes without warrant, without trial, and without statement of reasons for such arrest and confinement, should be forthwith withdrawn.

(d) This Conference records its conviction that the present political situation in India is due to the denial of the just rights, long overdue, of the people, and that the speedy establishment of swaraj is the only effective remedy therefor.

had the pleasure of waiting on the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, though I had intended to do so.

Then Mr. Gandhi referred to his interview with Mr. Jinnah last night and said that the latter assured him that there would be no difficulty in coming to an agreement on this question. The resolution had not been sprung upon the meeting. He would propose the appointment of a committee consisting of members representing several parties. He further proposed that the committee should forthwith proceed to consider the resolution and arrive at an agreement before 10 o'clock tonight, and that the resolution be presented to the Conference tomorrow.

New India, 22-11-1924

297. *SPEECH REPLYING TO DEBATE AT ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE, BOMBAY*

November 21, 1924

Mr. Gandhi, in replying to the debate, pointed out that the issue raised by Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar's amendment[1] was a large question, and the speaker wanted to dispose of the smaller question before taking up the bigger one of the unity of all parties. He characterized the amendment as putting the cart before the horse. If they failed to come to an agreement on this matter, what hope was there, asked Mr. Gandhi, that they would come to an agreement on a larger matter? He assured his hearers that the committee would, if it thought fit, support the Bengal Ordinance, or condemn it, as the case might be. He reminded the audience of its duty to Bengal and even to the Government, who had asked them to help them.

New India, 22-11-1924

[1] The amendment, being put to vote, was lost by an overwhelming majority.

298. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

BOMBAY,
November 21, 1924

Mr. Gandhi stated to an Associated Press representative this evening that there was absolutely no truth in the report of a local newspaper that he offered the Liberals the withdrawal of the spinning franchise and the limitation of the word "swaraj" to Dominion status. What, as a matter of fact, Mr. Gandhi told Mr. Chintamani and other Moderate leaders was that, if they desired those things, they should join the Congress and press for the acceptance of their views.

New India, 22-11-1924

299. SPEECH ON UNITY AT ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE, BOMBAY

November 22, 1924

After ascertaining the sense of the House, the President proceeded with the discussion of the resolution on the unity of all parties. Mr. Gandhi, who was called upon to move the resolution[1], did so in the following terms:

This Conference appoints a committee consisting of Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir T. B. Sapru, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Mrs. Annie Besant, Pandit Malaviya, Mr. R. P. Paranjpye, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, Mr. C. R. Das, Mr. Muhammad Yakub, Mr. M. H. Kidwai, Mr. Mahomed Ali, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Mr. Shinde, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Mr. T. V. Parvati, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. J. B. Petit, Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Babu Bhagwandas, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Mr. Joseph Baptista, Sardar Mangal Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Harkishen Lal, the President of the European Association, the President of the Anglo-Indian Association, the President of the Christian Association, the President of the Non-Brahmin Association (and a few others whose names were to be added later) to consider the best way of re-uniting all political parties in the Indian National

[1] Which was carried unanimously

Congress and to prepare a scheme of swaraj, including the solution of Hindu-Muslim and like questions in their political aspects, and to report not later than the 31st of March, 1925; the Conference to meet not later than the 30th April and the report to be published a fortnight before the Conference meets.

Mr. Gandhi observed that after many years, all parties joined together. In point of time and importance that resolution was of the greatest importance and of the utmost necessity. The Government might take today Mr. C. R. Das's head, but Bengal would go on, and India too, but if they did not get political liberty, they should die. Dealing with the resolution, the speaker said that the question would engage the attention of the best minds of the country. He was a born optimist. He felt that they were bound to come right, not for unity, but for swaraj's sake. After reading Dr. Kitchlew's telegram, which wanted unity without sacrifice of principles, Mr. Gandhi proceeded to observe that he found insuperable difficulties in the way. He could not carry conviction about his spinning franchise. He wanted some time to convince others or to be convinced by them. They must put their heads together to find out a workable and substantial unity. The committee proposed by him would frame the report for their consideration. Although it was painful to wait longer for unity, it was inevitable. Nobody could predict if the committee would come to any acceptable conclusion. In spite of all the clouds hanging around them, Mr. Gandhi hoped that the committee would penetrate into the darkness and find out a workable programme.

New India, 24-11-1924

300. CITIZEN'S HONOUR IS COUNTRY'S HONOUR

The honour of Bengal is the honour of the whole of India. Swaraj will not be far off when we come to realize that a single Indian's honour is the country's honour. This feeling is fairly widespread; but it has not yet spread as far as it should. If my brother is in danger, if his honour is at stake for no fault of his, I will not sit content after passing a resolution of sympathy; I will run to his assistance. We have not yet developed such a sentiment with regard to the country. When hundreds of thousands of Indians feel that their own brother has suffered if any Indian anywhere from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Assam to Sind endures agony, we shall soon find a way to end the policy of the Bengal Government.

Today, we are groping in the dark because there is no such fervour in our feeling. When pure feelings are aroused, their light will show us our path. Today we are apathetic. We shall gain great

momentum when feelings simmer like steam within us. Today we are disunited, we are fighting amongst ourselves. When we are welded together by ardent feelings, we will embrace one another and cling so close that we shall appear to be one though we are many.

Our brother is starving; we know that he can earn a living by plying the spinning-wheel but he does not do so out of laziness and that he will if we give him an object-lesson by spinning ourselves; in that case, we shall certainly take to the spinning-wheel. In India today, hundreds of thousands are in this predicament. Nevertheless, we find it difficult to ply the spinning-wheel even for half an hour in order to set an example for them, because we do not feel like brothers towards one another.

If all of us give up the use of foreign cloth and meet the country's need for cloth by plying the spinning-wheel, this Government would in large measure become redundant. Despite this knowledge, many of us refuse to spin because we have not developed such fervent feelings. Actually, there is no fellow-feeling between Hindus and Muslims in many cities. In such circumstances, millions of throats cannot chant the words "Our Country". And it is futile to hope for swaraj until such a situation is brought about. We can all see that the path to swaraj is also the path to the repeal of the policy being pursued in Bengal. The terrorism of the anarchists aims at winning swaraj. It is meaningless. However, the absence of swaraj is the root cause of the disease of terrorism. The reason behind the Government's terrorism is also the same. The Government, so far as it is possible, does not wish to give up its own authority. There would be no such terrorism, if there is swaraj. I, therefore, claim that if the spinning-wheel is the weapon for swaraj, if Hindu-Muslim unity is the means of securing swaraj, they are also the means for reversing the Government's policy of repression.

Moreover, as there is no fellow-feeling between Hindus and Muslims, what is the state of affairs between the untouchable Hindus and other Hindus? There can be no untouchability between brothers. It cannot be the case that one brother eats sweet dishes, while the other eats his left-overs. Only those who work for the abolition of untouchability know of the many barriers that stand in the way of its abolition.

Where the situation is so clear, where one is well aware of the disease and the remedy, to refuse to use the ready remedy and impatiently seek alternative remedies is as good as killing the patient.

Some say that the people want agitation. Agitation may have its uses but, to this day, no nation has achieved its independence through agitation alone. India will never be able to do so. It is our clear duty to give up agitation and take to our professions. To the extent we who realize this do not look to others but fulfil our own obligations, we may be considered to have come closer to swaraj. Hence, I have no doubt that whatever others in the country do, if those who have understood this will adhere to their duty, the whole country will follow in their footsteps. This is so, because there is no other way for achieving freedom for this country.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 23-11-1924

301. GUJARAT'S DHARMA

My advice to the Congress to suspend non-co-operation should not be interpreted to mean that Gujarat should give it up. Just as this advice does not apply to individuals, similarly it does not apply to provinces.

If the Congress suspends non-co-operation for the time being, it means that, taking the circumstances into account, it makes a concession to the people. However, in those places where the people and their leaders have faith in non-co-operation, where there are no disputes, where there is no lack of organization, the resolution for suspension should have no adverse effects. On the contrary, these provinces should consolidate their work and ennoble it.

For instance, the national schools in Gujarat should continue to function and grow, those lawyers who have given up their practice should abide firmly by their decision; besides, goodwill should prevail where there has been a feeling of animosity. No one should condemn or revile those who enter the legislatures or resume practice. Everyone, following the dictates of his own conscience, should continue non-co-operation or resume co-operation. The Congress resolution should result in suspension of that non-co-operation which is being practised because of the compulsion imposed by the [old] resolution — non-co-operation should cease to be a strategy or an experiment but should rather come to stay as a dharma. In other words, the people or individuals should carry on peaceful non-co-operation as a matter of duty wherever the policy of the Government is by and large

harmful. Those who would like to stick to non-co-operation even without the resolution will, therefore, continue to do so.

It could be said that the Congress resolution is like a pair of crutches. We shall now have to see, after all this experience, how many will stand without the crutches—without the prop of the Congress. If some people remain steadfast we shall be able to conclude that these have grasped the principle of friendly non-co-operation. It is my firm belief that there are many such individuals and I am also convinced that among provinces too there are more than one such, Maha Gujarat being one of them.

Maha Gujarat was the first province to offer non-co-operation. I wish that it should keep up this glory. Henceforth, non-co-operation will survive only if it is untainted. It should breathe humility, discrimination, love, peacefulness, intelligence, maturity, determination and truth. Peaceful non-co-operation will emulate nature. In nature there are many imperceptible sustaining processes which we know only through their results; so too in peaceful non-co-operation. Ether is a powerful medium, but who has seen it? We know it through its results. Has anyone seen electricity? But we know of it through wires, bells, engines, which operate because of it. We do not see the seeds lying underground. If we start digging in order to see them, they would not sprout. But springing from these seeds we see plants and trees, which yield grain, fruit and foliage. Friendly non-co-operation is a force subtler and yet mightier than all these invisible objects and forces. The conduct of the non-co-operator should, therefore, be equally subtle and invisible. There is no room in it for arrogance, hypocrisy, pretence or ostentation. Even while practising non-co-operation, by virtue of his love, he would not make the co-operator miserable. He should try and win over the hearts even of the British officials by dint of his love. Far from despising the latter, he should, if possible, render personal service to them. Even when he cannot abide by the latter's wishes, his conduct should be polite and considerate.

Anyone who cannot appreciate such non-co-operation or, cannot practise it, should rather fall back on the *status quo*, that is, co-operation. That non-co-operation alone is worth the name which can be practised by the father towards the son and *vice versa*. And I attempted to introduce this true non-co-operation in India in the year 1920. I have been well aware of the tremendous magnitude of the task, in the past as well as the present. I had and still have little capital. Everyone has the right to make an attempt and I have started my effort in pursuance of this right.

I request those who have understood it in its pure form to help me. Even my present suggestion for suspension is only a form of friendly non-co-operation. The path of love is like a flame of fire; many have run away on gazing at it. Those who wish to run away, may do so. However, those who will bear with that flame, will triumph.

I know of no non-co-operation which is devoid of love, nor do I even wish to know it. I have no other panacea for India's independence, for the protection of Hinduism or Islam, for Hindu-Muslim unity and for the abolition of untouchability. I believe that it is impossible to end hatred with hatred. And one of the reasons why I always put forward the spinning-wheel is its underlying peacefulness. Maulana Mahomed Ali has collected maxims in praise of the spinning-wheel from the literature of Islam and published them in his *Hamdard*. Readers will find their translations in this *Navajivan* and should reflect upon them.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 23-11-1924

302. *WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS DO?*

"What will happen to students when non-co-operation is suspended? What will be their position? Why should they not go to Government schools? And if you ask them not to go there, what sort of cruelty is it? They have sacrificed the most and do you wish them to sacrifice more? Will the poor always be sacrificed in this manner? If swaraj is to be won this way, who knows what will be the plight of poor people like us? Students have become almost panicky on hearing of the suspension of non-co-operation."

Some students are making such comments. When it is difficult even for mature non-co-operators to understand the change that is taking place today, it is not surprising that students are scared. There can be no two opinions on their sacrifices. Yet, there certainly is an error in the above reasoning.

What is suggested is not suspension of all non-co-operation but suspension of propaganda in favour of non-co-operation by the Congress. When an important section of the public which once had faith in a thing gives it up, that something cannot be made or regarded as universal. It cannot also be said that all people should renounce what the Congress renounces. The Congress may

have to renounce some thing against its will—not voluntarily. It may, however, hope that the people would not renounce it.

If the Congress is unable, for lack of funds, to start model schools at various places where children belonging to the Hindu, Muslim and other faiths can study together, not only is there nothing to prevent others from doing so, but, on the contrary, the Congress would congratulate anyone who starts such a school. Similarly, if the Congress calls off non-co-operation today it is not because it lacks faith in the principles of non-co-operation but rather because at present a large section of the public are unable to practise it. Despite this, the Congress would congratulate any section of the public which continues non-co-operation and proves its strength.

The Congress would not wish those lawyers who have given up their practice to take it up again. However, if any lawyer is helpless and starts practising, the Congress will not condemn him. Similarly, the Congress would, under no circumstances, wish those students who have practised non-co-operation to return to Government schools. It will not, however, condemn them if they do so out of exhaustion or for any other reason. Moreover, the Congress will endeavour and continue to run the existing national schools for their convenience and try to retain them in those schools. Non-co-operation has been "suspended"; it has not been abandoned for good. In case it is resumed, will students who have enrolled in Government schools come out again? Whatever the changes that may take place in other spheres of non-co-operation, national schools must continue to function and they will function. For, if they do not do so, the people will be disgraced.

This, again, is not enough; there should be an increase in the number of national schools with the passage of time. On attaining independence, non-co-operating lawyers will start practising in law-courts, but non-co-operation schools will continue to function. Other schools will bring themselves in line with these. The latter will not try to follow the example of the former Government schools. Maybe, this swaraj may not be secured today. Let it take ages to win. However, non-co-operating schools which will be in existence then will serve as models and the people will cherish them as such.

Hence I must say that wherever apprehension has been expressed at my suggestion for suspending non-co-operation, I see only a lack of faith in non-co-operation. How can anyone who has faith in his principles or his work get scared, be afraid or falter

in his own determination, because of another person's lack of faith or his repudiation? A man of faith is doubly confirmed in it by the lack of it in others. Just as a well-protected person gives up his apathy and becomes more alert when left unprotected, similarly, the man of faith on seeing his companions flee, holds more firmly to his conviction, fights alone like a lion and remains as steadfast as a rock.

Students have, no doubt, made sacrifices. However, it is necessary to grasp the inner meaning of sacrifice. One who makes a sacrifice does not seek sympathy from others. His condition is not pitiable; it is rather praiseworthy. That sacrifice which is made unwillingly or sorrowfully is not worth the name. Martyrdom is accompanied by cheerfulness, joy and vigour. A martyr is not irritated by renunciation but rather wishes for greater strength to renounce, since therein lies happiness. He is convinced that what appears to be a source of suffering today will finally become a source of happiness. Whoever practises non-co-operation is not a loser but a gainer. One who rids himself of dirt is purified. Giving up something that is despicable is like lightening one's burden. One who plies the spinning-wheel for half an hour makes a sacrifice or, in other words, he rids himself of idleness and selfishness, both of which deserve to be discarded. One who has withdrawn from a Government school has made a sacrifice as he has given up something which should be given up. At the time of sacrifice, he will not be crest-fallen but, on the contrary, his face will glow with happiness. Mirabai danced with joy when she renounced the pleasures of the palace. These had made her weep. To other eyes, this was a great sacrifice. For her the renunciation was bliss. Sudhanva[1] chanted the name of Narayana while dancing in a cauldron of boiling oil. Hence Pritam sang, "Those standing on the bank are shivering, while those who have plunged in it are enjoying bliss". For this very reason Nishkulananda said, "Renunciation cannot last without detachment."

So long as we are attached to something, we cannot abandon it willingly. The poor who are dying of starvation cannot be said to be undergoing an austere fast. They have been compelled to remain hungry. Their desire for food is undiminished. They can be said to be eating all the twenty-four hours as their thoughts turn constantly to food. That non-co-operating student whose thoughts constantly turn to a Government school but who, out of a sense of shame or some such reason, is only physically present

[1] Son of King Hansadhwaj of Champavati in the *Mahabharata*

in a national school, is neither a martyr nor a non-co-operator. His plight is truly pitiable. One can hope to save oneself if one's body is present where one's mind is. One whose body and mind are at variance deceives oneself, the world and God.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 23-11-1924

303. SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

November 23, 1924

I signed the agreement only in my individual capacity, and having regard to my own inward feeling. When I signed the agreement, I had made no mental reservations to the effect that I should be able to carry the No-changers with me. I do ask everyone in this House not to be carried away by what I may say. If I successfully appeal to anybody's reason, then I certainly want him to assent to this agreement, but if I do not appeal to his reason, I have no desire to appeal to his feelings. The success of this agreement depends on the heartiest co-operation of us all. I have not changed my views on non-co-operation or about civil disobedience and if today I seem to be marking time or receding from the position that I have always occupied, it is only seemingly so. As a matter of fact, so far as I am concerned, I am advancing; as a soldier, that I claim to be, of non-violence. As a non-violent soldier, I know quite well where I stand and what I should do. I cannot possibly today pretend to give any emphatic and summary decision which should command universal assent. The agreement lends itself to the construction which I have certainly not intended and which the Swaraj Party has certainly not intended. They do not want to help the Government. On the contrary, according to the best of their abilities and lights, they want to do away with the system under which we have been groaning for all these years—the system which I have not hesitated to describe as corrupt and Satanic. I retract not a single adjective that I have used against that system. It is a system which should be ended, if it cannot possibly be mended, without the slightest hesitation and without a moment's delay. If I have today entered into this agreement, it is in order to further

[1] Moving a resolution approving of the Calcutta agreement; the resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority. The source describes this report as the "substance" of the speech.

the purpose of destroying this system. I would today give battle to the whole country, if I should find that thereby I could end this injustice. I say I can do it. If I see that I could not do it, I shall immediately and hastily retrace my step.

It is said that the agreement is, on my part, a concession. Yes, it is a concession. There has been a concession on the part of both sides. Both of them want something to give and take. I believe that there is really nothing in the history of the universe or in the history of man which is not based on concessions, which has not something analogous to the step I have adopted to come to this agreement. From the No-changers' standpoint, the first thing to be noticed in the agreement is the equal status of the Swaraj Party that has been gained between the Swaraj Party and the No-changers in this agreement.[*sic*] I venture to say that it is their right to get equal status with the No-changers. In making that concession, I have done nothing more than what was reasonable and just. I could have done something else if I could possibly have to divide the house or if I could possibly make myself believe that it would be in the interest of the country to divide the Congress. I do not believe in the efficacy of the Council programme, and yet, I could not help doing it in the interest of the country. What I have done is in the interest of the country, in the interest of my own creed and in the interest of non-co-operation.

I cannot afford to neglect the Swarajists. I know that they are a growing party. I know that they represent a very strong body of public opinion in favour of Council-entry. I know also that they possess the best intellect in the country. Without the co-operation of such a body, who want to capture the Councils, I feared I would not be able to make any headway. Besides the Swarajists, there are the Liberals, the Independents, the Conventionists. They are all ranged against the No-change programme. The Swarajists, in their own way, are an advanced party. They have evidently influenced the atmosphere of Councils and of the Legislative Assembly. I could not—nobody can—defy their political sentiment. So far as the question of khaddar is concerned, they have not resisted my appeal to use khaddar on ceremonial occasions. They have not hurled a complete defiance at my appeal for khaddar. I practically confess that I consider it impossible to lead the battle of non-co-operation or of civil disobedience, unless we have by us the intellect of the country, that is to say, a large measure of the intellect of the country, which should range on our side in sympathy with us and even

actively co-operate with us. That we cannot expect unless we yield to them in some respects. In making this concession about Council-entry, we find that we have got with us the Council programme workers, who are wise men, men whom I claim to be practical men. The Congress is a National Assembly. We have to develop the Congress so as to enable it to represent every variety of opinion. We cannot possibly get the Congress to represent one variety of opinion for all time. It would be unwise to do so. We have to practise toleration, if for nothing else, at least for this purpose that we must have all the parties represented on the Congress, all the parties to educate the people politically. If we have all the parties represented on the Congress, if we do not like to divide the Congress, if we recognize that the Swarajists have a very large following in the Congress camp, then it is clear that, when we have an agreement, we must recognize that they have got the same status in the Congress as we have, that they have got the same right to use the name of the Congress as we have. In no sense and in no way should the political equality of all people of India be affected—that, in my opinion, is the meaning of the Congress as it exists today, as it should exist tomorrow.

The next point is this. As I believe, what we have got from the Swaraj Party is the maximum we could get. So far as the franchise is concerned, it is again my feeling that the common complaint or the grumbling on the part of a number of Swarajists is against khaddar. The No-changers believe in the possibility, in the ability, in the capacity of khaddar. I do believe in the capacity of khaddar. I cannot help myself in so believing. In my dream, in my sleep, while eating, I think of the spinning-wheel. The spinning-wheel is my sword. To me it is the symbol of India's liberty. I cannot help feeling like that. Such is not, however, the idea of the Swarajists. Many of them have sentimental objection. That being so, I had to make a concession. I believe that spinning should be a part of the Swarajists' programme like the Council programme, that we should introduce khaddar and the spinning-wheel into the franchise. It is absolutely a novel ideal. I do not believe that the spinning-wheel will give anything substantial to India. But is it a sin to spin? But I think it is wrong that we should divide our ranks on this point. I have affection for the spinning-wheel, but there are other countrymen of ours who have real disinclination to spin. For them I have given way in regard to the spinning franchise. Therefore, I had no hesitation in subscribing to the spinning franchise in the way I did to meet some of the unwilling Swarajists. I want to make this fran-

chise a living thing in the Congress. I want to make it successful with the help of the Swaraj Party. I have no hesitation in saying so. It requires enthusiasm, it requires studied application. That is my feeling. So far as the No-changers are concerned, I think they would not cavil at what I have done—they would not be unwilling to endorse what I have done—they would not believe that there is a peril of any kind. I would invite you—the No-changers and Swarajists—to accept the spinning franchise as mentioned in the agreement. My appeal is to the No-changers. It is equally to the Swarajists. I would ask you all not to reject the proposal about the spinning franchise. Accept it even for the sake of discipline. Accept it as an article of faith.

I entered into this agreement in this spirit that we want to make every article in that agreement a full success. We want to put our shoulders to the wheel and see whether, during the next 12 months, we do not bring swaraj nearer, if not within our grasp. If all the Congress parties work shoulder to shoulder, I have no hesitation in feeling that swaraj is not far away. It will be very near if we work the agreement with a will in the name of discipline. If you cannot work the agreement out in the name of discipline, if you cannot accept every line of this agreement and act up to it, believe me, it is much better for the country that you reject it before it is drawn up by the trusted leaders of the country. If you think you are fit for swaraj, accept the agreement, otherwise reject it. Reject it if it does not appeal to your reason. I do not want to appeal to your heart. I want to appeal to your cold reason.

The Swarajists are not idiotic, the Swarjists are not unpatriotic. They have got their own duty to perform according to the best of their ability. If they consider that it is necessary to give battle to Government by going to the Councils, let them go and make the Councils workable. They do not go to Councils to spite the No-changers. They do not go there to make harangues. They have a purpose in view. Suppose you do not allow them to go to the Councils, what are they going to do? Are they to rot? The No-changers should believe that the proper place for the Swarajists is inside the Councils and not outside.

The spinning-wheel has to be worked skilfully. Brothers and sisters, you must work the spinning-wheel with the patience of Job. We may not get swaraj by the methods we adopt; let us make the experiment; we are honest men. Let some of our friends go to Councils; let us make headway by some means. The duty of the No-changers is to prove to the Swarajists the value of the spinning-wheel. That should be the propaganda of the No-changers. I

made a compromise with the Swarajists in order that they may make the spinning-wheel a living thing. I appeal to the No-changers and the Swarajists to make this wheel propaganda a success. When I made the agreement, I had my reason; I had not lost it. I am not a lunatic; I am a reasonable man; I am a practical man; if the case requires, I will bend my knees before the country, before the Swarajists, before the Liberals, before Englishmen; because that is my creed. If I do not succeed, then the grave is the only other thing for me.

One thing must be absolutely clear to you, that you will have to accept or reject this agreement *in toto*. Either reject it or accept it as it stands. In an agreement there is no question of an amendment. My friends who suggest amendment forget that there were difficulties in my way. These friends do not appreciate those difficulties. If the agreement is to be rejected, the rejection must be based on sterner grounds—on grounds that are clear, unmistakable, i.e., reject if it is unfair to your conscience. In my humble opinion there is no such thing as ratification by unwilling people. If you start with distrust, reject the agreement. We must get rid of suspicion and distrust.

One word more. I do not look upon Swarajists as my agents. I look upon them as my co-operators. I consulted some of them as regards the legal interpretation of this document. I felt that I could subscribe to this document without impairing the strength of the No-changers. There are difficulties in the way of us all; they are not well appreciated. If there is suspicion, if there is tension, I would advise you to reject the agreement unanimously; otherwise pass it unanimously. I think it will be for the good of the country if you accept it. Nobody should be compelled to accept the agreement. I ask you to dismiss it out of your consideration if you think it ought to be rejected; summarily reject it. Accept it after considering it on its merits. If you are satisfied in that respect, then do not hesitate to accept it. But do not waste time by postponing its consideration; it would be bad. Accept it if you think you must have some machinery to work with. Do not delay. Utilize every available second you possibly can.

You must put the country on its honour; you must put all parties on their honour. Trust others and let others trust you. Persuade those who are unwilling, to come to your view. I am not sorry for signing the agreement. I think it was the most proper thing for me to do. I have left nothing which could possibly be introduced in the document. I do not want to bind any party or to bind the nation by what I have introduced into

the agreement. It is open to you to accept the agreement unanimously, if you believe that it is in the interest of the nation. Accept the agreement as sportsmen. I again say that the agreement should be accepted *in toto*.

The Story of My Life, Vol. II, pp. 485-9

304. SPEECH AT CONDOLENCE MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

November 23, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi then addressed the meeting in Gujarati. At the outset he offered apology for not addressing them standing as he was not strong enough to do so; besides he regretted that he had not the same voice which he had three years ago and if they found difficulty in hearing him he asked his hearers' indulgence.

Referring to Bi-Amma, he said when some great person in the world died they generally held meetings like the one they had held that evening and expressed their sorrow. He did not think Bi-Amma's death required that expression of sorrow or the Ali Brothers needed sympathy of anyone. For the death of Bi-Amma was so sacred that he thought everyone should wish that sort of death. Her works were good and acceptable both to God and man. She devoted her life to God and His creatures, and to India she gave her stalwart sons to fight her battle of freedom. Bi-Amma, therefore, yet lived, though she was dead, in her works. Fortunately evil done by men was forgotten and was not imitated but good works went to generations after generations and lived for ever. Bi-Amma loved God and her country, even up to the last of her life. He was present at her last moments and was much impressed by her love of God. Just as in a Hindu religious home a dying person would take the name of Rama so even she, till she breathed her last, kept up taking the name of Allah. It was her conviction in life that so far as Hindus and Muslims were not united India would not get freedom. He (Mahatmaji) had a talk that afternoon with Pandit Motilal Nehru who showed him a letter he had received from America in which one of the ex-satraps of Bombay, viz., Lord Sydenham, was reported to have said at a certain place that India was the key of the world, i.e., for economic supremacy and exploitation India was the chief country. Islam was in many parts of the world, like Morocco, China, etc., but in India the case was different. So long as Muslims and Hindus were not united there would be no freedom for them. Bi-Amma was very far-sighted and

[1] Held at Chowpatty, to mourn the death of Bi-Amma and Parsi Rustomjee, under the joint auspices of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay Swarajya Party, Rashtriya Stree Sabha, Parsi Rajakiya Sabha and the National Home Rule League; Sarojini Naidu presided.

whenever he (Mahatmaji) went to see her at Delhi she used to pray for wisdom for Hindus and Muslims that they might be united, and always asked for swaraj for India. It was not in her luck to see swaraj for India, but she had given India her two stalwart sons to unite Hindus and Muslims to attain swaraj. The best way to perpetuate her memory was, he said, by not erecting halls, statues or buildings but by everyone to vow to do his or her best to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity and attain swaraj and thus follow in her footsteps.

Mahatmaji then referred to another great loss India had sustained in the loss of Parsi Rustomjee in South Africa. He said Rustomjee was a noble soul and the citizens of Bombay should never forget his service to India as he too originally was from Khetwadi in Bombay. Finally, Mahatma once again urged the audience not to pass a formal resolution and depart but to emulate the life of these two great souls of India, viz., Bi-Amma and Parsi Rustomjee.

The Bombay Chronicle, 24-11-1924

305. TELEGRAM TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

BOMBAY,
November 24, 1924

DEEPLY GRIEVED YOUR LOSS. HAVE COURAGE AND FAITH.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 2347

306. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

Kartik Krishna 13 [*November 24, 1924*]

MY DEAR BRIJKRISHNA,

I heard last night of your bereavement. I have sent a telegram today. May God give you courage. If we realize that birth and death are both the same, we should have no cause for grief. A true friend never dies. One's wife is such a friend. If you constantly cherish the memory of her virtues, death would make no difference. May God give you the strength of character to keep the vow of *ekapatnivrata*[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2348

[1] The vow of remaining faithful to one wife

307. MAY GOD HELP

SABARMATI,
November 26, 1924

After much prayer, after much heart-searching, and not without fear and trembling, I have decided to accept the honour of presiding at the forthcoming Congress. I am to preside at a time when a gulf seems to be yawning between educated India and myself with some notable exceptions, and, save for a few young educated Indians of little fame, the intellect of the country seems to be ranged against my ways of thought and action and yet as I seem to be popular with the masses, and as many educated countrymen believe me to be as good a lover of the country as themselves, they want me to direct the Congress at this critical juncture in the history of our country.

I feel that I must not resist them. On the contrary, I must let myself be used, as I hope, for the benefit of the country. I was waiting, before coming to a final decision, for the verdict of the All-India Congress Committee. At its meeting the Swarajists were eloquent by their silence. I know that many of them are not enthusiastic about the proposed alteration of the franchise. But for the sake of peace and unity, they gave their vote in silence in favour of the change. The No-changers were despondent, chafing at the surrender, as they felt it to be, of their cherished ideals. They protested, but they did not cast the vote against the agreement.

This reflects credit on both the Swarajists and the No-changers, but it is no encouraging atmosphere to work in, especially when much is expected from one. But this is just the occasion for putting my faith in ahimsa to the test. If I have equal love in me for No-changers, Swarajists, Liberals, National Home Rulers, Independents and for that matter Englishmen, I know that it is well for me and well also for the cause.

I must not deceive the country. For me there is no politics without religion—not the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights, but the universal Religion of Toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to be avoided. "Then," says the critic, "I must retire from all public activity." Such however is not my experience. I must try to live in society and yet remain untouched by its pitfalls. Anyway, for me to run

away from the Congress at the present moment would be cowardice —for me not to accept the Presidentship would be to run away, especially when everybody is trying to make the path smooth for me.

I have abundant faith in my cause and humanity. Indian humanity is no worse than any other; possibly it is better. Indeed the cause presumes faith in human nature. Dark though the path appears, God will light it and guide my steps, if I have faith in His guidance and humility enough to acknowledge my helplessness without that infallible guidance.

Though I remain a confirmed non-co-operator and civil resister, I recognize that there is no atmosphere for non-co-operation or civil disobedience on a national scale. My attempt will therefore be in the direction of bringing all parties together without distinction of race, or colour or creed on the ground of mutual toleration and thus to demonstrate if possible that the Congress non-co-operation was not conceived in or based on hate or malice. I would throw the burden on all the parties of making non-co-operation and civil disobedience impossible, not by criticism or repression, but by achieving swaraj. I venture therefore to ask representatives of all the parties to respond to Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation to attend the Congress as visitors, when they cannot attend as delegates, and give the latter the benefit of their advice.

There is a heavy duty resting on the shoulders of Congressmen, whether Swarajists or No-changers, Hindus or Mussalmans, Brahmins or non-Brahmins. They have to show their programme on their persons and in their daily conduct. They will attend the Congress as servants and not as masters demanding service. They will show their faith in khaddar which they have been preaching for the past four years by wearing it to the exclusion of all other cloth. They will show their faith in unity between different religious sects and denominations by exercising the greatest forbearance against one another and showing respect for one another's religious observances. Hindus will show their faith in the removal of untouchability by going out of their way to be attentive to those of them who may attend the Congress.

Delegates and visitors will no doubt expect me to prescribe remedies for our many ills, for Hindu-Muslim distemper, for the Bengal repression, for the relentless persecution of the Akalis, for the Vykom campaign on behalf of unapproachables and above all for the attainment of swaraj. I have no patent remedy. The remedy is to be found with the delegates and the visitors themselves. Like

the finger-post, I can but point the way, it will be for Congressmen to take or reject it. May God help us all!

Young India, 27-11-1924

308. *LETTER TO SATISH CHANDRA MUKERJEE*

[*November 26, 1924*][1]

DEAR SATISH BABU,

I thank you for your long wire to Kristodas. Every word of it shows your love for me. I will not argue about the contents. But I give you my assurance that I have not consciously erred. Duryodhana[2] knew he was doing wrong. I am not compromising with evil. But I am doing what the Pandavas did. They negotiated with Duryodhana up to the breaking point. "You may keep all. Only give five little villages and you are free." The same thing almost occurs in the Bible. Sodom was to be saved even if there was one good man in it. But I have given you enough indication of the working of my mind.

Do please always continue to give me warning.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.N. 5607

[1] From the postmark

[2] Son of king Dhritarashtra and eldest of the Kaurava princes, in the *Mahabharata*; he tricked Yudhishthira of all his possessions at a game of dice.

309. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

November 26, 1924

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

I have read your letter to Mahadev only today. I note what Rolland says. Will you please thank him for his caution? You certainly did well in not coming to Bombay. Your first care must always be Shantiniketan. You saw the note ab[ou]t Rustomjee.[1] Will you not write something about him? For me he was one of the noblest of men in spite of his many limitations. I have wired you today regarding Burma and Egypt. Both places are faring badly it seems. But I have not enough knowledge.

With love,

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2617

310. LETTER TO BHAGWANDAS

[On or after *November 26, 1924*][2]

DEAR BABU BHAGWANDAS,

I do not know anyone in Banaras to whom I can entrust the following delicate business. One Mangal Dutt of Sultanpur became a convert to Islam some months ago. He gave his Hindu name as Ram Narayan in order that his identity may not be known. He is said to have kidnapped 10 Mussalman orphans from an orphanage in Delhi. He recanted and became an Arya Samajist under his real name through Dr. Sukhdev. He stayed with Dr. Sukhdev for some time. He is now said to be in the Sultanpur (District). Here is a letter addressed to him by Dr. Sukhdev. Could you please ascertain whether this individual can be found? Will he come and see me in Delhi? You may ask him if you meet him about the charge against him. Hakim Sahib strongly suspects that his embracing of Islam was mere camouflage resorted to in order to kidnap Mussalman children. He fears Arya Samajist

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 20-11-1924, sub-title, "Late Parsi Rustomjee".

[2] From the reference to Gandhiji's stay at Sabarmati where he arrived on November 26

complicity. I feel that we as Hindus are bound to find out the truth and help the orphanage authorities to trace the children. The matter has been kept in suspense because I am interesting myself in the affair. I am told that Sultanpur is very near Banaras. Will you kindly send some trustworthy person there and make local inquiry there about Mangal Dutt? He is said to be a married man. I am due in the Punjab about 4th December. You may address care Lala Lajpat Rai. Thereafter care Dr. Ansari, Delhi. I am at Sabarmati till 1st December.

Yours sincerely,

[PS.]

You will observe I have not forgotten the swaraj scheme.

From a microfilm : S.N. 10495

311. SHALL WE UNITE?

That the Conference[1] that met in Bombay last week did not result immediately in uniting all parties on a common platform shows the difficulty of the task. The appointment of a committee to consider the ways and means of bringing about a union shows that the Conference does not consider the task to be hopeless or impossible. Indeed Mr. Jesukhlal Mehta who moved that the committee should report on or before 15th December next had a very fair number of supporters. They were quite sanguine of immediate success. The cautious many, by fixing the date of the report at 31st March, if they have realized the difficulty, have also by implication thrown on the committee the burden of finding an acceptable solution. Writers in the Press can considerably help the committee by guiding public opinion in the right channel. The chief bodies to influence the committee are the Liberals, the Independents and the National Home Rulers. The last led by Dr. Besant have practically accepted the position set forth in the agreement between the Swaraj Party and me and now ratified by the A.I.C.C. The difficulties in the way of the Liberals and the Independents are practically the same. They are: the creed, the transfer of all Council work to the Swaraj Party and the franchise. It is said that the creed is equivocal. I venture to deny the charge. It is a recognition of the existing condition. It means swaraj within the Empire if possible, and without if necessary. It is intended

[1] All-Party Conference

to throw the burden on Englishmen of making it possible for us to be and remain equal partners in the Empire. It manfully declares the country's ability to stand on its own legs as an absolutely independent nation, if it became necessary. Swaraj within the Empire is a free State, a voluntary remaining in the Empire, ability to secede if India thought it desirable. Swaraj within the Empire must be a partnership at will between free nations. This is a vital position which cannot be surrendered. Even if those who are guiding the Congress at the present moment desired to alter the creed to mean swaraj within the Empire only and therefore that of a subject State, the vast majority of Congressmen will decline to accept the humiliation. To aim at changing the creed in the direction desired by the Liberals and the Independents is to run counter to the present national temper. The only thing they can do is to join the Congress and attempt to convince Congressmen of the utility or the necessity of the change, even as Maulana Hasrat Mohani has been attempting to change the creed so as to make independence of British connection the only goal of the Congress. I respectfully submit that there is nothing immoral or harmful in the present creed. On the contrary, the admission that, at the present moment at least, we are impotent for independence may be open to the gravest objection from an ethical standpoint. No nation that has the will, need be powerless for independence. In any case, I trust that all parties will recognize that the Congress has an electorate which can become insistent at times and that it is well that it is so.

What status the Swarajists should hold in the Congress is really for them to determine. They and the No-changers today dominate the Congress. If the Congress suspends non-co-operation, the Swarajists perhaps *ipso facto* become predominant. And if both the parties decide in the national interest not to divide the Congress, they must be recognized as joint and equal partners. What I have done is to recognize this simple and natural fact in the Calcutta agreement. If any party desires more, it can be obtained only by joining the Congress and appealing to the reason of the Swarajists or by educating the Congress electorate, *and also by forming new electorates*. The scope for widening the Congress electorate is infinite, and practically anybody can form Congress circles or committees, if he can find men and women of his way of thinking.

The third objection is the franchise. If it were not for its novelty, it would not only excite any surprise, but it would be welcomed as the best franchise test. Had it been workmen who had been the most influential people and not capitalists or educated men and

a property or an education test had been proposed, the powerful workmen would have ridiculed the suggestion and might have even called it immoral. For they would have argued that while capital or education were the possession of a few, bodily labour was common to all. My suggestion to make one form of labour, i.e., hand-spinning the test, may be valueless, may be fantastical, but it is neither immoral nor harmful to the nation. I hold that it is a positive gain to the nation, if thousands of men and women labour for the nation, even if it is for only half an hour every day. Nor need the wearing of khaddar dress cause any hindrance to any party entering the Congress. Khaddar has been given very great importance in the Congress organization for the past three years.

Surely there can be no insurmountable objection on principle to the wearing of khaddar as a franchise test. Unless I am grievously mistaken, some of the best workers will find no zest in remaining in the Congress, if the wearing of khaddar and hand-spinning were not made a qualification for franchise. There are at present two parties in the Congress. One has no faith in the Council programme as a means for attaining swaraj and is satisfied with the khaddar activity, till the country is ready for peaceful disobedience or non-co-operation. The other, while claiming to believe in the economic value of khaddar, believes that, if swaraj cannot be gained through Council-entry, at the very least some steps may be taken towards it and some check might be placed upon bureaucratic extravagance. I can see my way to avoiding a quarrel with the Swarajists by letting them go their way and by securing their co-operation in the khaddar programme to the best of their ability. I would beseech the Liberals and the Independents to appreciate the fact, which one man cannot alter. But this is certainly possible. Let the Swarajists, the Liberals and the Independents confer together and, if they come to the conclusion that khaddar is a spent bullet and that it is a mere mania of mine and if they do not succeed in convincing me of my error, I shall gladly stand out. I will not come in the way of their controlling and using the national organization for what they may consider to be the best interest of the country. I have been told by a prominent Swarajist that the khaddar programme is doomed to fail and that the Swarajists do not believe in it at all. I told him I did not share his disbelief. I told him that the Swarajists had sincerely accepted it and that they would zealously work for it. But assuming that the friend's prognostication is well founded and that the khaddar cult is a dividing factor in the public life, the sooner the country is disillusioned, the better for it. I must be permitted still to cling to it, so long as I

do not lose faith in it. But I may not be allowed to stop all national activities. I, therefore, give my earnest assurance that I shall not wilfully stand in the way of any honourable means that may be desired by the committee for bringing all the parties together. I am deliberately putting myself under the influence of Swarajists, Liberals and Independents. I am humbly trying to learn and understand their viewpoint. I have no axe of my own to grind. I share their anxiety for the freedom of the country. My way is different from theirs. I would gladly go their way, if I could. Let all parties then make an honest and earnest effort to find a way out. Let them approach the deliberations of the committee with faith and determination to find a common platform. Let them approach them with an open mind.

A friend asks whether Congressmen should not postpone the alteration of the franchise, pending the result of the All Parties Committee's investigations. I respectfully submit that a well-thought-out programme cannot be lightly postponed. Three months' solid work cannot be thrown away for fear that the khaddar programme may not be accepted by the Liberals and the Independents. If, however, the Committee finds that the khaddar programme is unworkable and really hinders real unity, the franchise can be easily amended by a special session. In my opinion, the interest of the country demands that each party should work out its own convictions, all the while allowing for possibility of error and consequent repentance and retracing.

Young India, 27-11-1924

312. *THE NO-CHANGERS' PLIGHT*

The position of No-changers is truly pathetic. The thought that I am largely if not wholly responsible for it makes me sad. My consolation—let it be theirs also—is that I am probably the most confirmed No-changer of all. But what is a No-changer? It is an ugly word. It explains nothing. But it has been used to denote one who swears by the original Non-co-operation Resolution passed at Calcutta in 1920.[1] Its operative part is non-violence. We were non-co-operating even before 1920 in that our minds were in revolt against the Government, whilst we seemed to co-operate with it by our conduct. All this was changed in 1920. We endeavoured to establish co-operation between thought, word and deed. We discovered that such co-operation was possible only through non-violence. And we further discovered that, if we withdrew from the Government as much voluntary co-operation as was possible, it must capitulate to the people. A No-changer therefore is one who, not wishing ill to the governors but still seeking to destroy their system, renounced the privileges (so-called) of the system, viz., Councils, courts, schools, titles and tempting foreign cloth. This was its negative part. Its positive and permanent part was establishment of independent schools, voluntary arbitration and manufacture of hand-spun yarn and from the latter of hand-woven khaddar. The Congress took the place of the Central Legislature, and solid work by volunteer workers was itself the highest title. But the five Government institutions not having been destroyed, and the new ones not having shown any effective results, some of us lost heart and sought in the Councils a means of rendering national service. Now the No-changers, if they had truly believed in non-violence, should not have been irritated over the lack of faith on the part of their erstwhile co-workers. They should have given them the same credit for honesty and patriotism that they claimed for themselves. But they violently opposed their co-workers, who now came to be called Swarajists. If they were truly non-violent, they would have been tolerant and have honoured them for their difference and allowed them to go their way. But their intolerance was not their fault. They did not even know that they were intolerant. Instead of being self-reliant and having an unquench-

[1] *Vide* Vol. XVIII.

able faith in their own programme, they sought strength from the Swarajists, even as we all, not wishing or being unable to overcome our weaknesses, seek strength from our rulers. That mentality of helplessness still survives, and hence the dissatisfaction with the agreement. Have the No-changers real love for the Swarajists, even though they may not be all that they claim to be and even if they may be as bad as some of us believe them to be? If they have that love, they will not worry about what the Swarajists are doing.

Again, the vast majority of No-changers have no activity to absorb them the whole of their time, save khaddar. They must have a correct attitude about Hindu-Muslim relations and untouchability. But all cannot have any active work to do in regard to these items. The national schools can but absorb only a few workers and they must have special qualifications. But khaddar is an activity that can absorb all the time of all available men and women and grown-up children, if they have faith. If they are truly non-violent, they must also realize that civil disobedience is an impossibility till the preliminary work of construction is done. Civil disobedience means capacity for unlimited suffering, without the intoxicating excitement of killing. That cannot come until we have attained a certain calmness in the atmosphere and until we have a reasonable certainty that Hindus and Mussalmans, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, caste Hindus and untouchables will not quarrel and until we have understood the secret of hand-spinning and hand-weaving to the extent, by their aid, of feeling independent of public support for workers. We may be only a few such or many. If we are many, we have ensured a calm atmosphere. If we are few, we must perish in the attempt to quench the conflagration raging about us. If there are such No-changers, they cannot quarrel with the agreement. For it is but a method of finding out the number of unbending and unbendable No-changers, No-changers whose love will stand the severest test and whose faith in the triple constructive programme will, if necessary, outlast the faithlessness of the rest of India. They stand in no need of sympathy from anyone. On the contrary it is I who need and ask for all the sympathy and support that they can give me. These consist in self-effacing, silent and sustained service without grumbling and without the expectation of reward, save the approbation of one's own conscience. Let the reader be sure that there are such workers. They need no introduction or advertisement through the pages of *Young India*.

Young India, 27-11-1924

313. NOTES

If I Were Viceroy

Two English friends seeking to justify the repressive policy now being pursued in Bengal asked me what I would have done if I had been in Lord Reading's or Lord Lytton's place. The answer came ready to my lips. But I observed that I gave no satisfaction to the friends. The reason for dissatisfaction was that they thought that it was easy enough for me to give the answer so readily, as I was not as a matter of fact in the place of these distinguished Englishmen. But as, after having thought over my answer from every point of view, I regard it to be sound, and as I have no doubt that many Englishmen, who honestly believe that repression is justified, think like the two friends, I venture to reproduce my answer with some amplification.

The very first thing then that I would have done would have been to summon Indians of position and trust, and I would have shown them all the papers and would have been guided by them. In the case of Subhas Chandra Bose, I would have confronted him with my suspicion and published his statement. In consultation with those Indians of position and trust, I would also have summoned Deshbandhu Das and put the whole burden of responsibility on his shoulders, in so far as the suspected members of his party were concerned. By this procedure I would have quietly ensured public peace or been assured that the information given to me was wrong. This is the least I would have done, and that too if I had no trust in my legislature, or if there was no time to summon it. What is more, I would have realized my own unenviable position. I would have seen at once its hypocrisy. Having therefore dealt with the crisis, I would have tried to discover the true disease, of which the crisis was but a symptom. For that purpose, I would have summoned representative Indians before me and tried to ascertain why there were young, able and otherwise peaceful men, who would mercilessly kill innocent men and recklessly put their own lives in danger. I would have learnt that they had no selfish end and that they wanted liberty for their country. I would therefore have been guided, in dealing with the root cause, by the advice of the summoned representatives, taking care that no legitimate foreign interest was thereby jeopardized, and having done this I would

have breathed free in the knowledge that it would be equally the business of my legislature as mine to deal with any such future eruption.

I know that in the foregoing I have made no new suggestion. But its staleness is its merit. The existing system has lived on terrorism and Viceroy after Viceroy as a rule has shut his eyes to the obvious necessity of consulting Indian opinion. The obduracy proves not the uselessness of the advice, it proves the worthlessness of the system under which such systematic defiance of public opinion is possible. No wonder the Viceroy, instead of obtaining the public support which he thought he should have had, is obliged to face severe condemnation from practically the whole Indian opinion.

A Misunderstanding

My note[1] on the Gaya Congress resolution about the repudiation of public debts has, I observe, given rise to some misunderstanding. It was unfortunate that it was published at a time when we are thinking of unity. The fact is that the note was written three months ago in answer to a correspondent. From week to week my assistants put it by to give place to other things that in their opinion were more important. When it was finally published they did not see any incongruity between that note which was bound to raise useless controversy and other writings which were intended to emphasize matters of agreement. Whilst, therefore, I consider the appearance of the note inopportune at the present moment, I must say that it still represents my view of public debts. Whatever the Gaya resolution may mean, my note is quite clear. I do not seek to repudiate all debts incurred by the present Government but I do submit that when the final transference of power comes it will be necessary to examine all the transactions of the Government and they will have to stand the light of examination. Suppose for instance the Government were to make a gift of a hundred million to a foreign syndicate for the exploitation of the mineral resources of the country, it would not only be just for, but it will be the duty of, the Swaraj Government to repudiate it. Indeed perhaps I go a step further in one respect than the Gaya resolution. I would claim to bring under scrutiny not merely the transactions since the date of the resolution but every transaction of the Government which may appear to bear an immoral taint. For this Government claims to be and is

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 13-11-1924, sub-title, "Public Debts".

presumed to act justly, honourably and as trustee for the millions of the people of India. Breach of trust or any other unjust dealing cannot claim the protection that prescription gives to honourable dealings.

Young India, 27-11-1924

314. THE TRUTH ABOUT NATIONALISM[1]

> It is becoming clearly a matter of first-rate importance for the younger generation of Indians, who are faced with the altered world situation after the Great War, to think out afresh, in the light of that experience, the truth about Western nationalism and its application to the East. . . .
>
> The truth is that during my recent travels in Malaya and Burma I found on all sides this hostility towards Indians, as foreigners, being awakened. . . it meant to me that the whole world was going mad after "nationalism" of a European type, and not Europe only. . . .
>
> These things had disturbed me before Mahatma Gandhi's fast; but during the fast itself the further thought came to me, that just as in Europe the wars of hostile religions had ended in the wars of hostile nations, so in India the Hindu-Muslim tension might easily take the same course, unless we were forewarned about it. . . .
>
> We have, alas ! also today to acknowledge in India a class-warfare, equivalent to the class-warfare between Labour and Capital in Europe. There is the cruelly narrow hostility between class and class contained in "untouchability". . . .
>
> Are we truly representing the universal spirit of India in all our new developments? Or, are we merely copying over again some of the most retrograde features of the West? Is our picture of swadeshi becoming clouded with thoughts of hostility and ill will to others? . . .
>
> The sovereign test is non-violence. . . .
>
> It is because I have felt all along that this spirit of Ahimsa or Love was fundamentally behind the national movement, in spite of its forbidding name of non-co-operation, that I have stuck to it, through thick and thin, and remained its defender, even when "violence was in the very air". . . .

There is no fear of Indian swadeshi becoming impure or racial so long as it confines itself principally to khaddar and things which can be and should be manufactured in India. It is not exclusive but conservative. It is not anti-British or

[1] From this article by C. F. Andrews on which Gandhiji has commented, only extracts are reproduced here.

anti-foreign but pro-Indian by necessity. India must protect her primary industries even as a mother protects her children against the whole world without being hostile to it. Violent nationalism, otherwise known as imperialism, is the curse. Non-violent nationalism is a necessary condition of corporate or civilized life.

Young India, 27-11-1924

315. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI[1]

[After *November 27, 1924*]

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

Please send a receipt for this to Mathuradas. What is the sum from Dabholkar meant for? We too should deposit these two sums, and such others that might be lying with us, if we are not already doing so, with some bank, so that they may earn interest.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 11743

316. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SABARMATI,
November 28, 1924

NEHRU
ALLAHABAD

SORRY ABOUT BABY'S DEATH.[2] GOD'S WILL BE DONE.

GANDHI

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 41

[1] In reply to a letter of November 27, 1924, from Mathuradas Trikumji with a cheque for Rs. 153-0-8, being interest on two sums that were lying with him since Gandhiji went to jail

[2] Jawaharlal Nehru's son died about a week after his birth.

317. *TELEGRAM TO DR. SATYAPAL*[1]

[On or after *November 29, 1924*]

WILL PRESIDE IF MOTILALJI OR MAULANA UNABLE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 11744

318. *TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD*

[On or after *November 29, 1924*][2]

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD
RIPON STREET
CALCUTTA

MOTILALJI SAYS HE CANNOT COME. PLEASE ATTEND. YOUR PRESENCE PUNJAB SPECIALLY REQUIRED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 11744

319. *MY NOTES*

BI-AMMA

I have already written about Bi-Amma's death in *Young India*.[3] That lady had unbounded love for religion. Her passion for religion was worth emulating. Her patriotism was rooted in her love for religion and this very same love was responsible for her desire for Hindu-Muslim unity. She had finally come to such a state that she made no distinction between religion, patriotism and communal unity. She saw that Islam could not be safe if

[1] This was in reply to the telegram from Dr. Satyapal received on November 29, 1924, which read: "Your telegram. Motilalji wires: 'Your telegram about my accepting presidentship not accurate. Regret impossible to attend. Make other arrangements.' Very anxious please accept presidentship otherwise whole conference miserable failure. Punjab situation needs delicate handling. Entirely depending on you. Please wire acceptance. I gave you accurate information Delhi. Have got reaffirmed. Kitchlew accepts present arrangements. Humbly request bring other leaders to decide our problems."

[2] *Vide* footnote to the preceding item.

[3] *Vide* "Notes", 20-11-1924, sub-title, "Bi-Amma".

India did not attain independence; the latter was dependent on communal unity. This, in turn, is impossible without Hindu-Muslim unity. In this manner, because she had seen it with her own eyes, this good woman repeatedly talked of these three things till her death. During her last days, I had the good fortune of having her *darshan* a number of times. She would ask me: "When will Hindus and Muslims unite? When shall we win independence? Shall I live to see it?"

Every soul is immortal; such a pure soul, however, manifests its immortality clearly. Although Bi-Amma is no longer physically with us, her deeds and her words will not die so long as Hindus and Muslims survive. The mother who has left sons like the Ali Brothers cannot possibly perish. My love for these Brothers grows as I recall their love for their mother. That old lady's word was law to them. They believe that the credit for whatever they are goes to their mother.

The night of Bi-Amma's death is unforgettable. Maulana Shaukat Ali was present at my prayers that day when a telephone message said that Bi-Amma's illness had taken a serious turn. On hearing this, the Maulana left immediately along with Dr. Ansari. I was informed of this after the prayers. I took Sarojini Devi along with me and went over to their place. The whole family had gathered around Bi-Amma. All were chanting the name of Allah. Pearl-like tears were trickling down Maulana Mahomed Ali's face; but I did not hear him utter any word except the name of Allah. Maulana Shaukat Ali was trying to restrain his tears but his face disclosed his grief. Nevertheless, he retained his presence of mind. He was well aware of what was going on around him. Arrangements were being made for the subsequent ceremonies. He pressed me to leave as he felt that I was weak and should not stay there long. I have many such instances of his attentiveness and his kindness.

I could not but compare the patience and the faith in God that I witnessed in that small room with our custom of crying and screaming. I have seen many deaths among Hindus. I have often seen that even when the person is still alive, instead of chanting the name of Rama for his sake, people start weeping aloud. All religions forbid weeping for the dead. Hinduism regards birth and death as modifications of the very same state; and yet I have not come across the barbarous and godless custom of weeping and wailing among any other people except the Hindus. I have been present at deaths among Parsis, Jews, Christians and Muslims. Nowhere have I seen any weeping and wail-

ing. I was pleased to find only devotion to God on the occasion of Bi-Amma's death. I wish that thoughtful Hindu families will immediately discontinue the harmful, barbarous and futile practice of weeping and wailing as irreligious.

I learned much else by my association with Bi-Amma. That lady used only khadi till the very end, and that too not of fine quality but of a coarse, common variety. Her orders were for the use of pure khadi even for her burial. I saw these being carried out. In the home of the Ali Brothers, I saw everyone, old and young, wearing khadi.

Neither the Brothers nor anyone else in the house suspended their work even for a moment. Maulana Mahomed Ali did not stop writing. He continued to issue instructions regarding *Hamdard* and *Comrade*. Maulana Shaukat Ali did not stop his work even for a single day. He had to visit Muzaffarnagar the very next day. He punctually fulfilled that appointment. I had to go to Ramjas College that very day. Even though the time coincided with the hour of the funeral, they did not allow me to cancel this engagement. They sent me away after assuring me that they would send for me to act as a pall-bearer before taking her remains to the burial ground. All this suggests devotion to duty, courtesy and faith in God. I have heard all this said of Tilak Maharaj. Whatever the nature of the sad news that he received, it made no difference to his daily routine. I have frequently come across such devotion to duty among Englishmen. It is not an exaggeration to say that without such patience one is not fit to be called a human being.

Parsi Rustomjee

In the death of Bi-Amma, as Maulana Shaukat Ali says, India has lost a true soldier. With the passing away of Parsi Rustomjee also India has lost a true soldier. So far as I am concerned, I have lost a true friend. I have come across few men like Parsi Rustomjee. He had had hardly any education. He knew a little English and his knowledge of Gujarati was not much. He was not too fond of reading. Right from his youth he was in business. Through sheer hard work he had risen from the status of a common clerk to that of a big businessman. Despite this, he had a keen common sense and great generosity and he was so tolerant that, although he was an orthodox Parsi, he had the same affection for Hindus, Muslims and Christians. I have never seen anyone going round for funds return empty-handed from him. His loyalty to his friends was so staunch that many gave him their

power of attorney. I have seen many prominent Muslim businessmen name Parsi Rustomjee their representative in preference to their own relations. No poor Parsi was sent away from Rustomjee's shop. He was as sparing towards himself as he was generous towards others. Luxuries had no place in his life. He spent money after great hesitation on himself and his family. He continued to live in great simplicity till the end. Parsi Rustomjee's shop was the only place where Gokhale, Andrews, Sarojini Devi and such others stayed. The minutest detail did not escape his eyes. Who else but he could be given the responsibility of packing Gokhale's forty-five packages consisting of innumerable addresses of welcome and such other things, making a list of these and loading them on the steamer?

By making a trust in the name of his dearly loved wife Jerbai after her death, he gave away the larger part of his wealth in charity. He has not pampered his children at all but has rather brought them up in simplicity and left them an inheritance sufficient only to prevent them from starving. He has remembered all his relations in making his will.

He took part in public affairs with the same degree of precision and firmness described above. At the time of satyagraha, Parsi Rustomjee was the first among the businessmen of Natal who were prepared to sacrifice their all. It was his way not to give up a task once he had undertaken it, whatever the risks involved. He had to serve a longer sentence in prison than expected, but this did not frighten him. The struggle continued for eight years; many staunch warriors fell. Rustomjee, however, did not waver. He made his son Sorabjee also plunge into the struggle.

I first made the acquaintance of this good Indian in 1893. At first I was not greatly impressed by him. However, as I got more and more involved in public work, I learnt more and more to value the gemlike qualities in Parsi Rustomjee. He was my client, my colleague in public-work and finally he became my friend. He did not hesitate to come to me and describe his faults like a child. He astounded me by his faith in me. When the whites attacked me in 1897, Rustomjee's house sheltered me and my sons. The whites had threatened to burn down his house and property. That threat, however, did not deter him in the least. He continued the relationship thus built up in Africa till the time of his death. He continued to send money here too for public work. He was to have come here in December at the time of the Congress session. God, however, willed otherwise. Sheth Rustomjee's death is a great loss to the Indians in South Africa.

Sorabjee Adajania passed away, after that Ahmed Mahomed Kachalia died, some time back P. K. Naidu, and now Parsi Rustomjee has departed. There are hardly any Indian workers of their calibre left in South Africa now. As God is the friend of the helpless, He will look after the Indians in South Africa. But the void created by Parsi Rustomjee's death will never be filled.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 30-11-1924

320. AN OPPOSITIONIST FRIEND

Very often we learn more from a person who opposes us than from one who shares our views. This depends, however, on our having the tolerance and patience to listen to and understand criticism. I have learnt much from my critics because, I believe, I have these two qualities. I give below a letter from a critic:[1]

I believe this letter has been written sincerely. The writer is angry but he has written what he believes. He has read a causal connection in what was merely a coincidence. He has found all my acitvities blameworthy because he did not get a reply to a telegram he sent me. I have all along believed that I am very regular in answering communications and the colleagues around me are not only not wicked but are engaged in the pursuit of truth. Nevertheless, even the most regular man cannot answer all the letters and telegrams he receives. It was impossible for me to read all the telegrams I received during the fast. It was also not possible for my colleagues to reply to all of them. It is indeed sad that the correspondent has not understood this obvious fact. His argument runs as follows: Non-co-operation is on and business in India is slack, hence the former is responsible for the latter; and since I am the author of non-co-operation I am the one who is to be held responsible. I wish to present the opposite argument. People did not implement non-co-operation in full, they did not wholly accept the religion of the spinning-wheel, hence India too became a prey to the economic depression that has affected the world. The people did not grasp the significance of non-co-operation because there are, in India, many impatient and impetuous persons like the correspondent. Hence India has to suffer. If they were patient and tried to understand non-co-operation and practise it, India would be free today.

[1] The letter is not translated here.

Moreover, the correspondent's denunciation of innocent khadi has often been answered. Nevertheless I repeat the argument for the sake of the correspondent and other sceptics like him. It is not khadi alone that gets dirty, all white clothes get dirty. It is a little troublesome to wash khadi as it is coarse. However, if we had not become delicate by Western pampering, we would not have disliked washing khadi but enjoyed it. Moreover, those who wear khadi use fewer clothes and hence, on the whole, the trouble of washing is less. I would even go further and say that those who are unhappy about coarse khadi should spin fine yarn and have it woven so that khadi will be as fine as muslin and it will be less expensive than the latter because all the processes right up to spinning will have been free of cost. Ever since voluntary spinning was introduced the facility to obtain fine khadi for those who wish to wear it has been provided. Those who, through laziness, do not spin fine yarn will no longer have the right to blame khadi for its roughness. If voluntary spinning continues and spreads, it will be possible to obtain from the market as much fine khadi as one wants.

The spinning-wheel is intended to increase one's income. It is an *annapoorna*. The correspondent is a lawyer. He cannot be aware of the condition of the poor. If he were to stroll in a poor village, he would realize that even a single pice is welcome to the destitute. Crores of labourers do not earn even an anna a day. For them the spinning-wheel would be like a *Kamadhenu*[1]. Acharya Ray has testified to this.

The writer's sarcasm about law-breaking is well worth considering. It is quite true. Just as people failed to understand that "peaceful" was the first concomitant of non-co-operation, similarly, they failed to realize that disobedience of law should necessarily be "civil". There is no doubt that unwelcome results have followed this. Many people have taken it for granted that anyone has the right to disobey any order or any law. This should be regarded not as civil disobedience, but as an impudent, uncivil and ruinous breaking of the law; it is, in some respects, even more harmful than an armed revolt. However, this cannot be considered a drawback in civil disobedience. It is a fault which may be attributed to a lack of understanding on the part of the person who resorts to breaking the law. Such lack of understanding does arise in any new movement. Such imperfection is to be expected when an imperfect man works among other imperfect men. How-

[1] A mythical cow which yielded whatever was asked of her

ever if both the parties—the reformer and society—make *bona fide* mistakes out of ignorance, the divine law is that the error corrects itself. I repent wherever I discover errors. The public too corrects mistakes without any ill feeling. Between the two, there is a section of people which deliberately interferes with and hampers the movement. The only remedy lies in a wider propagation of these principles which appear new and a greater understanding of them by all. However, I welcome the outburst of the correspondent which serves us as a warning.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 30-11-1924

321. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE NOW?

Step by step khadi is gaining ground. The All-India Congress Committee has accepted the suggestion of introducing khadi franchise. We hope that the Congress too will accept this. Whether the Congress accepts it or not, those who believe in the efficacy of spinning will glorify their membership by spinning. The Swarajists have in good faith agreed to include spinning and khadi as conditions for the right to vote. In order to encourage them and confirm their faith, the No-changers should forge ahead and make others do so. There are about 2,000 voluntary spinners in Gujarat today. We find it difficult to keep up this number; this is a measure of our organizing ability and a test of our tact. All our abilities will be on trial in making the progress rapid. We shall succeed only when a large number of workers continuously strive to achieve this. Thousands of persons may contribute their labour. They cannot contribute cotton, nor can they obtain it. Neither can all of them prepare their own slivers. Hence in every village, in every taluka, we should have good carders. In every town, in every taluk there should be persons who can make good frames for the spinning-wheel and for the carding bow. The committee or the sub-committee should have a godown for cotton. The province which can do all this well will be regarded as having acquired executive or administrative ability. How shall we acquire the ability to run the government under swaraj, if we cannot do even this much? We shall not automatically acquire such ability on securing swaraj. We shall, however, realize that swaraj is implicit in the acquisition of such ability. The East India Company gained control over us by destroying our spinning industry. Our salvation lies in the revival of this very thing.

So far, it is only those who have been able to get the spinning-wheel, slivers, etc., that have spun yarn. If we now expect half an hour's labour from many more people, the committees must provide all these needs. If there is a true awakening amongst us, thousands should participate in this great sacrifice which requires little effort. Moreover, since swaraj cannot be won without the spinning-wheel, it should not be surprising if thousands take part in it. In my opinion, the spinning-wheel is the easiest means for winning swaraj. It can illumine all other activities, and the latter will be meaningless without it.

We have no other peaceful means of ascertaining whether people are really capable, whether they truly desire swaraj. The ability to win swaraj is not proved by thousands or lakhs of people attending mammoth meetings. It is not acquired by thousands of persons contributing money. Money has no value where there is no one to make use of it. Swaraj cannot be won even by a large number of people studying Hindi or English. On the other hand, I have often and in many ways shown how the power to win swaraj lies in spinning.

I am convinced that if the spinning-wheel does not yield results, the only way open to India for winning swaraj will be bloodshed. True independence can never be won through legislative assemblies alone. Every Indian has understood and learnt by heart this axiom. What remains then is to tread the path of strength. First, there is the path of peaceful strength, where we have to suffer, where we have to do some constructive work.

Secondly, there is the path of violent strength, where we have to punish our adversary. Today, all of us regard this as fit only to be renounced. It is a fact simple enough to be grasped even by a child that today India can achieve nothing by pursuing the path of violence.

The reader should therefore forgive me if I see before my eyes only the spinning-wheel. And I would invite him to take full part in this grand sacrifice, if he too sees what I see.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 30-11-1924

322. *MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS*

Khadi Bhandar

The Bombay Branch of the Gujarat Provincial Committee's Khadi Bhandar is situated on Kalbadevi Road. Shri Jamnalalji has taken over the Bhandar so as to accommodate the Committee. Shri Jamnalalji did not at first intend to run it for long. Since sudden closure was likely to entail great loss and since it is necessary to have such a Bhandar where it is, it has been retained for the time being. This Bhandar certainly does not aim at making any profit. I therefore recommend to the residents of that locality, who believe in the khadi movement, to visit the Bhandar with a view to encouraging it, if they find the goods and prices reasonable.

The Late Dalbahadur Giri

Two donations have been received in the name of the deceased, one of Rs. 100/- from Smt. Jerbano Pyarelal, the other of Rs. 80/- sent by a gentleman from Calcutta who collected it from several people. Possibly, the late Giri's family may come to stay at the Ashram. In case they do, this amount will be utilized to support them. If they do not come to the Ashram, the amount will be sent to them wherever they are. They have already received some aid through the Bengal Provincial Committee. Readers will be informed how this family fares; in the meanwhile no one need send me more money. Readers will be informed if more is needed.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 30-11-1924

323. SPEECH AT GUJARAT NATIONAL COLLEGE, AHMEDABAD

November 30, 1924

Addressing the students of the Gujarat National College, Mr. Gandhi said that the proposed suspension of non-co-operation by the Congress did not mean the closing of national educational institutions, or their affiliation with Government universities. The existence of these institutions was an accomplished fact, and it was up to the Provincial Congress Committee to keep them intact. The speaker would not only suggest a resolution to be passed by the Congress that such institutions should be kept up, but would suggest that whenever they were desired by the people, even new ones should be established. If there were students who did not believe in non-co-operation as a national necessity but had given up Government educational institutions merely out of loyalty to the Congress resolution, they were free, without any stigma attaching to them, to rejoin Government colleges. The proposed suspension of non-co-operation would enable the country to know the strength of confirmed non-co-operators. Non-co-operation as a national programme might be suspended, but that did not mean suspension by an individual or even by provinces, if the provinces would retain it without causing bad blood or internal dissensions. The movement, like every other human activity, might have its periods of ebbs and flow, but it had come to stay, and would continue in some shape or form among men and women or groups so long as the existing system of Government lasted.

Replying to a question, Mr. Gandhi said that the national schools and colleges identified themselves with national politics in so far as they had to be a living advertisement of what Hindu-Muslim unity should be, or what the correct relation between the so-called untouchables and caste Hindus was to be, and what the spinning-wheel meant. The future historian would measure the progress of non-co-operating educational institutions by the progress in them of these three items. These three items were common cause between Swarajists and No-changers. The difference was a difference in emphasis. They should not believe that the Swarajists had accepted the khaddar programme without any belief in it. It would be unjust to believe, unless there was proof to the contrary, that any party said what it did not mean. There was no question whatever of giving a go-by to khaddar. The speaker had no hesitation in saying that those students who did not believe in the khaddar programme were wasting time in remaining in national schools and colleges.

New India, 1-12-1924

324. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

Thursday [Before *December 1, 1924*][1]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I hope you have understood the mason's case.

1. If he agrees to arbitration, please consult Mavlankar and request the lawyer to arrange for it.

2. If he refuses to have it, give him the proper replies [to his plaint] in consultation with Mavlankar.

3. If you are required to appear before the court, do appear; stand up to the plaintiff's cross-examination with patience and stick to the point.

4. The case is likely to be decided in our favour; if not, you should file an appeal.

5. If we win the case, we shall be allowed costs. These we are not going to obtain, for when a decree is in our favour we have to approach the court for realization of the costs. This incident carries for us the lesson that we should reduce to writing the work to be done by the workers. The contracts should be written down in detail. Let me know the lawyer's name.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Anandananda has now become very uneasy and is also tired. Please have a talk with him. If Chhaganlal can attend to the work there, let him do so and let Anandananda be given some respite. Who attends to his work during Chhaganlal's absence? Anandananda needs some rest; he can be given some other work. He has impressed me as a very capable person. He has freed me of all worries regarding *Navajivan*, financially and in other ways also, and has raised the weekly remarkably. I wonder if you have made a study of the man. Whatever that may be, think about this matter in consultation with Mahadev, Narahari and others.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6098. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

[1] The date of receipt as given by the addressee is 1-12-1924.

325. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[December 1, 1924][1]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

We must not lose Khimji's suit against us. You may take all the measures you think proper. We need not sue him for perjury. But you may make an affidavit for your alibi if that is necessary. Vallabhbhai will be able to tell you more.

As for carding, make whatever arrangement you deem proper. Personally, I think that all those who know carding well should spare at least some time and keep one carding-bow working the whole day. This should be done first to keep up the practice; secondly, to show that it is our profession; thirdly, to supply slivers to the best of our capacity. All these three aspects are equally important at the present time.

I told Chhotalal last night all that was necessary. I have already told Chhaganlal too. But I do not possess that power by which my words once uttered would have an immediate and permanent effect. I have to be near the persons all the time. I wish I could stay at the Ashram for a long time and supervise the work there. But God does not allow me to fulfil that wish. Who can prevail against Him?

BAPU

[PS.]

Herewith the reply for Shambhushankar.

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 6044. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

326. LETTER TO RAMABEHN PATTANI

SABARMATI,
Magsar Sud 5 [December 1, 1924][2]

DEAR SISTER,

I have your affectionate letter. I shall be at the Conference[3] on 8th and 9th January. After that you may take me to some quiet

[1] As given by the addressee

[2] This was written in reply to the addressee's letter of November 24, 1924, inviting Gandhiji to spend a few quiet days at Trapaj after his return from the Belgaum Congress.

[3] Kathiawar Political Conference

place for a few days. I will have to be back here on the 14th at the latest. Everything will be arranged after I go there. I have been persuaded to visit Kathiawar and preside over the Conference in the hope that women like you may help me in the propagation of khadi. If this wish of mine is fulfilled, that will give me greater peace than the peace I can get in a quiet place. I hope you are well.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

LADY RAMABAI PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3183. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

327. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Magsar Sud 6 [December 2, 1924][1]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I write this letter on the train going to the Punjab. I got your letter. I shall clarify the Congress policy regarding the Native States. I hope to have some peace under your shelter after the Kathiawar Conference.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3182. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

328. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

ON THE TRAIN,
December 2, 1924

BHAI SAHIB,

I have your letter. I alone have the privilege to fall ill. Other workers may not. I hope your leg is completely cured. I understand your complaint. I shall not give you the trouble of going to the Council. My *Vandemataram* to all.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9550

[1] From the postmark

329. NOTES

At Belgaum

I should like workers to know that I am to preside at the forthcoming Congress only as a businessman presides at business meetings. The demonstrative character of the Congress will be exemplified in its exhibition and other side-shows. And if we are to do any substantial business, workers must frame a programme of work beforehand. If we are to do this, all the workers should attend and give their help. This they cannot do unless they understand, appreciate and whole-heartedly accept the agreement. I would not like their acceptance out of loyalty, whether they are Swarajists or No-changers. The agreement is not for show. It has been arrived at not to impress others but ourselves. Mere outward assent without inward conviction and co-operation would be worse than useless. So far I have not received any criticism from Swarajists except by way of an appeal from some for not changing the franchise as proposed. But I am besieged with angry or sorrowful protests from No-changers. I am endeavouring so far as is possible for me to explain the position and solve doubts through these pages. But I know that there is nothing in the world like a full and free chat. I was hardly able to do justice to the No-changers or myself at the hour's chat with them whilst the A.I.C.C. was sitting. I am therefore setting apart the 20th instant for a conference with No-changers at Belgaum which I hope to reach in the morning on that day. I am asking Sjt. Gangadharrao Deshpande to avoid demonstration and let me enter Belgaum quietly so that no time may be wasted. I request all the No-changers, who wish to take part in the discussion, to attend this informal discussion. At the same time I would warn them against flooding Belgaum so early. The Congress session will not begin before the 26th instant. The Khilafat Conference does not begin before the 24th instant. The National Convention cannot be much earlier. I therefore suggest that the No-changers in each province should select two or three as their spokesmen and representatives who should be fully armed with the views of the rest. The whole of the afternoon of the 20th can be given to interchange of views and there may be further discussion on the 21st if need be. I am corresponding with Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilalji Nehru to ask whether they would like me to have a similar discussion with the Swarajists. I would then

gladly give a part of the 21st solely to them. So far as the attendance of delegates is concerned, I do hope that there will be full attendance on the part of both the parties. For though so far as I am concerned I wish to carry no proposition of importance by party voting, I am anxious to know the mind of the delegates. It would not be a proper discharge of their trust, if they stay away out of apathy, indifference or disgust. No one should offer himself as a delegate who does not wish to devote his time and attention to national work. Every delegate is therefore in duty bound to attend, if it is humanly possible, and help to shape the Congress policy for the coming year.

Hand-spinning at Adyar

The reader will be glad to read the following letter received by Dr. Besant from Mme. de Manziarly and her comments thereon which I reproduce from the current number of the *Theosophist*:

> I read in *New India* about your talk with Mr. Gandhi concerning spinning and would like you to know what is going on in that respect in Adyar. In May (when you were absent in London) I learned to spin. I was the first to do it on the compound, because I was so intensely interested in village welfare, home industries and dreaming of active help to the villages round Adyar through spinning, weaving, dyeing with vegetable dyes, embroidery and other rural industries. Later, others learned to spin, and now in our new vocational shed belonging to Miss Barrie's Montessori school, Mrs. Peramma gives lessons to eleven village women, besides several ladies and children of the compound. The charkhas are made by the carpenter belonging to the vocational shed. I am now learning to weave, and we have already two looms in the shed, and soon I will start the dyeing. It may be of use to you to know and to be able to tell about our endeavour.
>
> There must be not so many European women spinning in India, and it is perhaps interesting that a theosophist does it, and not out of a political conviction, but only from the wish to help—which coincides with politics. We even could send yarn through you to Mr. Gandhi for the Congress, if you wish us to do so instead of weaving it into khaddar ourselves. Now at least a dozen people are spinning regularly.
>
> To the spinning and weaving we will add other things—beauty, which will enrich soul and spirit and give creative joy, and in this way not only the economic life of this poor people will be improved, but their spiritual life too—and by it our synthetic theosophical programme fulfilled. We dream too—and being neither old nor young, I combine the two—*see visions and dream* of a wonderful work before us.

It is interesting—and curious to those who live on the surface—that this has been going on in my absence, and that I, knowing nothing of it, just on my return to India, said to Mr. Gandhi in Bombay, I was willing to spin half an hour a day, if it would help unity. Mme. de Manziarly is a very charming woman and "has a way wid her", as the Irish say. So she suggested to the women who began to spin salable yarn, that they should spin for a charkha that would be their own; they preferred the annas, but she so praised the usefulness of having a charkha with which they could go on spinning annas perennially, that they exchanged yarn for charkhas and then carried them home for their own use. Now yarn is made and woven into cloth in the Craft Shed, and out of the cloth little jackets of the South Indian fashion are made for the children and these are becoming the uniform of the school. Mme. de Manziarly bought various kinds of charkhas, and she and the carpenter between them made one which is very simple and effective. They spin from the seeds directly, without any intermediate processes. Now she has gone off to learn vegetable dyeing, which is still done in Southern India, and which she wishes to add to our villages here. This is a well-considered plan, and the idea may spread. Parts of it might be taken up in any village, and the whole in the larger villages. If a panchayat were added to it, the village would be on the right road.

Breach of Faith?

It is a healthy sign of the times that there are people in the country who are jealous of the morals of the nation. A friend, not himself a Liberal, asks, "Was not the ratification of the agreement between the Swarajists and Gandhiji by the A.I.C.C. a breach of faith with the All Parties Conference?" The answer, in my humble opinion, is an emphatic "No." The agreement is the basis of invitation. The two wings of the Congress must first unite. In the absence of the Congress, that unity can be expressed by the A.I.C.C. The agreement is final so far as the two wings of the Congress are concerned. But it is open to attack and even to revision at the instance of any outside party. The attack can succeed only if it appeals to the reason of both the wings. No party is called upon to surrender its principle for the sake of unity. The agreement now ratified by the A.I.C.C. is not an ultimatum—either this or nothing. There are many things outside the agreement which all the parties have to consider. Congressmen are not expected to suspend their principles or policy pending decision of the All Parties Conference. But they are expected to keep an open mind on everything. They must approach the question with a receptive mind. Subject to that one essential condition, it is

better that all parties declare their principles, policies and intentions. There should be no mental reservations. Not to proceed with the ratification of the agreement would have meant a mental reservation. What we must aim at is the same spirit of toleration that we need and are striving after in the relations between Hindus and Mussalmans. We want to unite and respect one another in spite of the sharpest differences of opinion, that is to say, if we have a common goal to pursue. We may find to our great grief that there is no common goal, that swaraj does not mean the same thing in any of its aspects to all parties, that our interests are not the same. Then I admit there is no uniting of all parties on the Congress platform. But that would be the same thing as saying that there is no swaraj for poor India. For after all when swaraj comes, different parties will work in the same Swaraj Parliament. The Congress is intended to be a forerunner and prototype of such a Parliament.

An Important Omission

Pandit Motilalji says that an important reference in my speech at the recent A.I.C.C. meeting[1] about the propriety of an appeal by the Swaraj Party for support has been omitted in the reports published in the Press. It was undoubtedly important and I wanted it to be reported. I therefore gladly give below the purport:

> The Swarajists have a perfect right to strengthen and organize themselves and to appeal for support to the country, not excluding the No-changers. If non-co-operation is suspended, and the Swaraj Party has the same status as the No-changers in the Congress, the latter may not object to such propaganda. Indeed it would be improper to do so. Such in my opinion is the undoubted implication of the supsension of non-co-operation. This does not mean that whole-hoggers should join the Swaraj Party. As Deshbandhu had a perfect right to do, he invited me to join the Party. I told him I could not, so long as I had no faith in Council-entry. I could only help from outside. Nor could any other true No-changer join. But those who have no such scruples and remain out, only because the Congress programme stands, may certainly join the Swaraj Party without any interference from No-changers. The latter's propaganda against Councils cannot be vocal; their ceaseless work on the charkha must speak for itself. The Swarajists have both the Councils and the charkha. No-changers have nothing but the charkha to swear by.

[1] *Vide* "Speech at A.I.C.C. Meeting, Bombay", 23-11-1924.

Pragji Desai

On learning that Mr. Pragji Desai who, as the editor of the *Navayug* of Surat, was the other day sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour, was wasting and was not getting proper food, I wrote[1] to the Inspector General of Prisons inquiring about Mr. Desai's condition. The following was his reply:

> I have enquired into the allegations regarding Mr. P. K. Desai.
>
> 1. It is true that his weight has fallen from 138 lbs. on admission to 128 lbs. now. But as he is unduly obese this can hardly be regarded as a ground for complaint. He is still 17 lbs. above the normal weight of a man of his height.
>
> 2. He is not isolated from the rest of the prisoners. A convict night watchman is always with him and they work together. He is also within sight of other prisoners.
>
> 3. The Superintendent denies that the vegetables given to any prisoner are as a rule grassy and uneatable. Considering that there is a large and excellent garden at Hyderabad Prison there is no reason why this should be so.
>
> 4. He was sentenced to rigorous (not simple) imprisonment and therefore cannot be allowed to choose the work on which he shall be employed in jail.
>
> 5. The Medical Officer of the Hyderabad Central Prison is at present an Indian Officer of the I.M.S. who can be entirely trusted suitably to regulate the diet of all prisoners according to the requirements of their health and constitution. He reports that Mr. Desai does not look weak or debilitated.
>
> In conclusion I may say that I inspected Hyderabad Prison three weeks ago and on that occasion saw Mr. Desai. He did not complain to me of any of the matters mentioned by you. His only request was that he should be transferred, as the climate of Hyderabad did not agree with him. As there was no reason for thinking that such was the case, I did not consider it necessary to take any action.

It is quite true that Mr. Desai made no complaint. He did not because he thought he should not complain against officials who were all Indians. He wanted to put up with the inconvenience. I knew that Mr. Desai was a hard-labour prisoner, but even a hard-labour prisoner may ask for the kind of labour for which he is best fitted. I have the pleasure of knowing well the present Inspector General of Prisons, for he was the Superintendent during the last months of my imprisonment. He is strict, but he is

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Col. Mel", 13-11-1924.

just and patient. I am therefore hoping that Mr. Desai will not be allowed to undergo unnecessary suffering.

Indians in South Africa

The Natal Government are still after the Indian settlers. They are determined to harass them out of that Colony by hook or by crook. The latest is a measure that among other things deprives the Indian taxpayer of the municipal franchise. There never has been a charge against him of abuse of the franchise. He is admittedly an orderly citizen. But the idea is simply to subject him to degradation so as to make it impossible for self-respecting Indians to remain in Natal. Let us hope that the Governor-General will as before refuse his assent to the atrocious measure.

Spinning Clubs

Sjt. Nambudripad sends me a record of the activity of a spinning club formed at Trichur. It is too early yet to write with confidence about the activity of the club. But the formation of such clubs is very desirable. They can assist the development of voluntary spinning and cannot but be helpful to novices. The Trichur club has about 25 members. They hold competitions. Every member is pledged to spin at least 2,000 yards per month for the A.I.K.B. I hope that similar clubs will be formed all over the country.

Boro Dada on Education

Boro Dada has sent me the following note for publication in *Young India*:

> A celebrated English poet of the eighteenth century said:
> "A little learning is a dangerous thing,
> Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring."
>
> To this I add that the education, which is spreading among our people, is worse than a little learning. The right sort of knowledge, which is rooted in the heart of the Indian people, is a gift of God, and of those *rishis* of olden times who devoted their whole lives to the service of God. This is positive knowledge, while the education of the present day, which has no *heart* in it, gives a sort of negative knowledge. The acquisition of negative knowledge is tantamount to a loss of positive knowledge. Minus a hundred is a hundred times less than minus one. Therefore, the most highly modern educated man in India of the present day is in reality an ignoramus in comparison with a rightly educated son of India, who may never in his life have crossed the threshold of schools and colleges.

Young India, 4-12-1924

330. NOT EVEN HALF-MAST

The perplexity of No-changers continues unabated. Some of the best among them, those whose advice and co-operation I value above everything else, are bewildered. They feel that I have probably given up even lifelong principles for a patchwork. One such communication I quote below:

> You are reported to have said that not having the power to give battle to the Swarajists immediately, you are forbearing, marking time. But why thus? The cause of truth and non-violence demands that you keep the flag flying for us collectively outside the Swaraj Party and the Congress, in no spirit of hostility to anybody, even as Mohammed did. His followers dwindled to three depending upon the holy God's strength. Personally you undoubtedly gain by surrendering and helping opponents, but the cause suffers irretrievably when non-co-operators are neither asked nor allowed to hoist the flag collectively. No spiritually-minded man can take interest in politics which neither promotes nor draws sustenance from truth and non-violence. No strategic unity will attract God, because fight with the Government then becomes immoral. Further, under the Swarajist regime there will be nothing to purify the criminal tendencies of impatient idealists as under your previous regime of high moral idealism and spiritual endeavour. Now utter futility and blank despair will stare them in the face.

The friend represents a large body of non-co-operators. He himself was attracted to the struggle because of its spiritual nature. I have therefore carefully read the message more than once. My hope is that he has formed judgment on garbled, even misleading, reports of my speeches. He was not present at the Conference. He was not in Bombay. It is most difficult to follow any movement merely from newspaper reports. I have not seen the report to which the friend makes reference. The expression "giving batte to the Swarajists", torn from its context, may bear a meaning opposite to the one intended by me. Let me explain: I cannot give battle to the Swarajists, if they misunderstand me, if No-changers do not understand the spirit in which a battle of non-violence conceived in a humble spirit can be offered, if the Government takes of such a battle advantage not contemplated by me, or if the atmosphere required for it is wanting. What has happened in fact is that all these things have more or less come about. Let it be further remembered that with me the safety of the cause has not

lain in numbers. My so-called popularity has been perhaps the greatest stumbling block in the swift execution of my plans. I should not have done penance either for the Bombay riots or Chauri Chaura if the people who took part in them had been utter strangers to me and made no profession of non-violence. So long therefore as I continue to attract crowds, I have to walk warily. A general with a large army cannot march as swiftly as he would like to. He has to take note of all the different units in his army. My position is not very unlike such a general's. It is not a happy position, but it is there. If it often means strength, it sometimes means a positive hindrance. It is perhaps now clear what I mean by "not having the power to give battle to the Swarajists".

I have in no way "lowered the flag" of non-co-operation. It is not even brought half-mast. For not a single non-co-operator is called upon to deny his faith. It is always risky to bring in the illustrations of the great prophets or religious teachers of the world. I am in the world feeling my way to light "amid the encircling gloom". I often err and miscalculate. But since the geat Prophet's name has been mentioned in this connection, I may in all humility say that I am not without hope that I shall not be found wanting if I am left with but two human comrades or without any. My trust is solely in God. And I trust men only because I trust God. If I had no God to rely upon, I should be like Timon, a hater of my species. But if we are to draw a moral from the lives of the great teachers, let us also remember that the Prophet entered into treaty with those with whom he had little in common and who are described in scathing terms in the Koran. Non-co-operation, exodus, resistance and even violence were with the Prophet phases in the same battle of life wherein truth was everything.

I do not believe as the friend seems to do that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer. I believe in *advaita*, I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent. I do not help opponents without at the same time helping myself and my co-workers. I have not asked or advised believing non-co-operators not to "hoist their flag" either collectively or individually. On the contrary I expect them to keep it flying top-mast against all odds. But that does not mean that the nation or the Congress non-co-operates. What we must recognize, if we will not ignore facts, is that the nation, i.e., the Congress in so far as it represents the nation, is not carrying out the

programme of non-co-operation. It must therefore be confined to individuals. Non-co-operating ex-lawyers, ex-title-holders, ex-schoolmasters, ex-councillors may remain that to the full and still belong to the Congress. Their special programme is hand-spinning and khadi. These the Congress has not yet rejected. The Swarajists are gracefully accommodating No-changers in this respect to the fullest extent compatible with their convictions. They do not consider, as No-changers do, that universalizing hand-spinning is necessary for accelerating the exclusion of foreign cloth. And yet in order to retain the co-operation of No-changers, if you will, my co-operation, they, seeing that they have no objection on principle to hand-spinning, have become party to its introduction in the franchise. It is well to bear in mind that the introduction of hand-spinning as part of the franchise is an extraordinary proposal. A conscientious man like Mr. Stokes opposes it tooth and nail, although he is himself an enthusiastic spinner. Many of our distinguished countrymen laugh at it. It is no small thing then that the Swarajists have accepted. Therefore if they prove true to their word (and I have no reason to doubt it), non-co-operators do not need any separate organization. The No-changers need not, ought not, to take part in the Council activity and therefore the Swarajists have the sole authority and consequently sole responsibility for the Council programme. They will use the name of the Congress as of right but they will not therefore use the name of the No-changers. The Congress is a joint concern in which the liability and responsibility for certain items are joint and for a particular activity given to and taken over by a section.

If unity, removal of untouchability and the charkha are an integral part of the politics of this country, then No-changers have all the truth, all the non-violence and all the spirituality that they may wish for. A No-changer's fight with the Government consists chiefly in purifying himself and developing his own strength. But he must not by any act of his impair the power of the Swarajists whom he is bound to regard as honest as himself. A No-changer should be the last person to arrogate sanctity for himself to the exclusion of others. And granting that the Swarajist system is bad, let him not act as if the existing system of Government is not much worse. Even a believer in non-violence has to say between two combatants which is less bad or whose cause is just. Between Japan and Russia, Tolstoy gave his verdict for Japan. Between England and Dutch South Africa, W.T. Stead[1] sided with

[1] English journalist; an enthusiastic supporter of the peace movement in Great Britain

the Boers and prayed for England's defeat. Between Swarajists and the Government, I do not take a single second to make my choice. There is danger of our vision being blurred because of the Swarajist revolt against the programme of 1920. Assume for the moment that the Swarajists are as bad as the Government would have us believe, even so their government will be infinitely preferable to a government which has limitless resources for crushing the slightest attempt at independence of conduct or real resistance. I am not aiming at any "strategic" unity. I am simply aiming at representation of all parties in the Congress, so that we may learn to tolerate one another's opinions, we may know one another better, we may react upon one another and, if we cannot find a common method of execution, we may at least frame a common scheme of swaraj.

I agree with the friend in his concluding remarks that it is not the Council programme that will ultimately keep the impatient idealist from mischief, but it is the non-violent non-co-operation which evokes the highest spirit of self-sacrifice that will wean him from the error of his ways. I promise that I have done nothing to weaken the strong non-co-operator. With myself, I have put him on his mettle. Let him sacrifice himself to the utmost on the altar of unadulterated love and the whole Congress will follow him like one man. But such love acts in an unseen manner. The more efficient a force is, the more silent and the more subtle it is. Love is the subtlest force in the world. If the No-changer has it in him, it is well with him and everyone else.

Young India, 4-12-1924

331. SUSPEND OR ABANDON?

The answer to the question whether non-co-operation should be suspended or abandoned depends purely upon the temperamental state of the answerer. He who has never believed in non-co-operation naturally wants it abandoned for ever. He who like me has always believed in and practised it, whenever and wherever necessary, and who therefore swears by it can with difficulty only be persuaded to vote for suspension in the hope no doubt that some time or other he will be able to carry the sceptic and the unbeliever with him and make its national working a success. Suspension therefore is the neutral state that can be accepted by all parties. Those who believe in the efficacy and necessity of non-violent non-co-operation may be permitted to cherish

the hope that if the occasion necessitated revival the nation would take it up. Those who disbelieve in it will be free under suspension to preach the evil effects in their opinion of non-co-operation to convert Congressmen to their views. That is the grand opportunity that suspension gives them. And in my opinion a wholly non-co-operating Congress cannot be expected to go further than suspension. I say "wholly non-co-operating Congress" because Swarajists too claim to have faith in non-co-operation. Let me give up a secret, if secret it can be called. The very first draft prepared now more than three months ago began with a preamble reiterating belief in non-co-operation. It was quite acceptable to Swarajists. But it was removed by mutual consent in order to make it easier for Liberals and others to join. It was pointed out by some friends that Liberals and National Home Rulers might object to voting for the preamble. In fact consistently with principles extraordinary care was taken by all who had a hand in drafting the final agreement to anticipate and meet the requirements of those who have remained outside the Congress. I know that even so, the agreement falls short of the full requirements of the various political groups and parties. The reason for the defect is not due to want of effort or will, but it is due to both the Swarajists and myself having to take into account our respective principles, or call them limitations if that word is preferable.

Moreover, I cannot too often repeat the fact that we had the great Congress electorate in mind. It is true that it is as yet not always assertive when it ought to be but I have noticed that on occasions it can assert its will despite the effort of the leaders to the contrary. It is the same electorate that all of us have to affect and be affected by. In finding the ways and means of agreement I venture to think that each party if it is to work in unison has to be satisfied with just sufficient and no more for the requirements of its conscience.

After all, no one wants non-co-operation for the sake of it. No one prefers imprisonment to freedom. But when freedom is in jeopardy, non-co-operation may be a duty and prison may be a palace. It is for all those who would under every circumstance avoid non-co-operation to make it unnecessary for non-co-operators to resort to it. And one of the best methods of bringing about such a result is for all parties to unite, devise a scheme of swaraj acceptable to all parties and discover at the same time if it is possible a common method of enforcing that scheme.

Young India, 4-12-1924

332. *WHAT IS SEDITIOUS?*

The Allahabad High Court pronounced Professor Ramdas Gaud's Hindi Readers as seditious, although it was admitted that the Readers contained nothing but selections from books already in circulation. The High Court has also awarded costs against the professor in the sum of Rs. 300. The Readers have been proscribed three years after their publication. I admit that evil does not cease to be such because of lapse of time. But it is fair to ask why the Government allowed the evil to run for such a long time. It is a just presumption that the Government chose a time when non-co-operation was at its ebb. The relevant question however is, what Professor Ramdas Gaud or better still those parents and those institutions that are using the Readers should do? It is not an easy question to answer. We are about to suspend non-co-operation and therefore also civil disobedience. Such acts therefore cannot receive the moral support of the Congress. Every individual and every institution must act on its own responsibility. The extracts quoted in the judgment divide themselves into three parts:

1. Those that are said to excite hatred against the Government.
2. Those that are said to excite hatred against Western civilization and by implication against Europeans.
3. Those that excite hatred against persons belonging to different religious communities.

In the first instance I venture to suggest that almost any book can be held objectionable, if isolated passages from it torn from their context are to be judged. So far as I know the judges had nothing more. Secondly almost every Indian newspaper can be declared seditious, because it does excite disaffection towards the "Government (i.e., the system, not the men composing it) established by law". For almost every Indian has pronounced against it and is seeking to end or mend it. So far as the Western civilization is concerned, it is possible to find terrible passages from Hindu scriptures holding up the modern system to ridicule and contempt. My booklet, from which passages referring to Western civilization have been quoted, has been placed in the hands of children with impunity. I may have erred in my condemnation. But it was written not to preach hatred against any portion of mankind but love for all that lives. I know of no instance in which

a single mind has been corrupted by the reading of that booklet. It has been translated both in India and abroad into several languages. It was once proscribed by the Government of Bombay.[1] But the proscription has been removed in practice if not in theory. It is strange then that Prof. Ramdas Gaud should be punished, when I am left untouched. In support of the third charge, namely promotion of inter-religious hatred, I see only one passage quoted. I do not know in what context it occurs. But it is clear to me that the books have not been proscribed for the sake of that one passage. I know that the professor has a clear conscience. He has not intended to excite hatred against any individual. I know too that he has made no profits out of the sales. If I were he, I would leave the circulation undisturbed. The books in stock must have been confiscated by the Government already. But where the Readers are already being taught, I would continue to teach them unless the parents or the trustees decide otherwise.

Young India, 4-12-1924

333. *THAT FIJI REPORT*

To the Editor, *Young India*

SIR,

Nearly three years ago the Government of India sent a Commission to Fiji Islands to enquire into the condition of Indians resident there and to ascertain the causes of discontent among them and to advise whether or not, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, Fiji offers a suitable field for Indian colonization. The Commission visited the Islands in the beginning of the year 1922 and submitted a report of their enquiry to the Indian Government in September, 1922. So the report has been with the Government of India for more than two years. In the last session of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Gaya Prasad Sinha asked the Government of India some questions about this report. Here are three of his questions:

(c) When do the Government of India intend to publish the report?

(d) Is it a fact that the Colonial Office has taken strong objections to certain views expressed in the report?

(e) Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table communications on the subject which may have passed between the Colonial Office and the Government of India?

[1] The reference is to *Hind Swaraj*; *vide* Vol. X, p. 181.

Mr. J. W. Bhore replied on behalf of the Government:

(c) The question of publication is still under consideration.

(d) & (e) In view of the answer given to part (c) of the question, I hope that the Hon'ble member will not press for an answer.

The request of Mr. Bhore to Mr. Gaya Prasad Sinha not to press for an answer to his questions (d) and (e) raises suspicion in our minds. Is it really a fact that the Government of India has been withholding the Fiji report simply on account of the objections of the Colonial Office? . . .

A large amount of money was spent from the Indian treasury on this Commission and the Indian public has a right to demand that the report of the Commission should be published without any delay.

I am, etc.,
BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI

Let me hope that Mr. Sinha will be more successful at the forthcoming session of the Legislative Assembly.

Young India, 4-12-1924

334. LETTER TO COL. MURRAY

AS AT SABARMATI,
[About *December 4, 1924*][1]

DEAR COL. MURRAY[2],

I thank you for your reply about Mr. P. K. Desai. I knew that he had not complained to you because he was averse to saying anything about officials who were Indian. I was aware that Mr. Desai was a hard-labour prisoner. But as at Yeravda I thought you would not mind letting him work at the spinning-wheel and spinning yarn not twisting thread at it.

I thank you for your inquiry about my health. I seem to have completely recovered after the very successful operation by Col. Maddock.

I did not know that Col. Mel had retired.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 11729

[1] Col. Murray's letter to which this was a reply appeared in *Young India*, *Vide* "Notes",4-12-1924,sub-title, "Pragji Desai".

[2] Inspector General of Prisons

335. *CAN UNTOUCHABILITY BE DEFENDED?*[1]

[*December 5, 1924*][2]

In my opinion Mr. Andrews is over-considerate to Babu Kalishankar Chakravarti. Whilst the condition of untouchables in the South is no doubt much worse than that of the untouchables in Bengal, it is bad enough in Bengal and admits of no defence. *Namasudras* can better speak of the effect of untouchability than its defenders. Let us learn from the English rulers the simple fact that the oppressors are blind to the enormity of their own misdeeds. The untouchability of Hinduism is probably worse than that of the modern imperialists. We have made it hereditary with a rigidity not yet observable about its imperial edition. Will Babu Kalishankar please remember that the English imperialists offer for their untouchability the same defence that he does for the Hindu untouchability? The safer course therefore is not to find out which is worse but to recognize the evil of our own system and endeavour to root it out.

Young India, 11-12-1924

336. *HARRY THUKU OF KENYA*[3]

[*December 5, 1924*][4]

> Tyranny is the same all over the world. The essence of tyranny lies in the repression of the individual without any trial by his fellow-men and without any evidence being given in public against him. . . .

[1] This article by C. F. Andrews on which Gandhiji has commented, is not reproduced here. In it Andrews had replied to Babu Kalishankar Chakravarti's letter from Bengal defending untouchability. His defence read: ". . . The other day Mahatmaji has said that violent non-co-operation is vicious, but non-violent non-co-operation is good. Exactly the same is the case with untouchability. Vicious it is certainly when attended with hatred and oppression, but without them very good. It was designed to keep the people separate whose character, habit and intellect are not similar, and this kept the society in peace and contentment for thousands of years, and saved it from corruption and destruction. . . ."

[2] & [4] *Vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 5-12-1924.

[3] From this article by C. F. Andrews on which Gandhiji has commented, only extracts are reproduced here.

When I was in East Africa, I met one of the brightest lads I had seen in that country. His name was Harry Thuku and he was a Christian. . . . At a meeting of the Natives of East Africa in Victoria Park at Nairobi, which he had organized for me, I spoke to the Africans themselves about Queen Victoria the Good, and the ideals of liberty and racial equality which she had professed in the Proclamation of 1858. . . .

About a year after this experience, I saw one day in the papers that the Africans had been fired on and many killed and wounded, because of excitement in Nairobi, and that Harry Thuku himself had been deported to a place called Kisumayu, without trial. He sent a message to me, through Mr. Manibhai Desai, asking me for help and claiming the right of a British subject to be tried face to face with his accusers, instead of being secretly taken away to a distant place and interned without any trial whatever. I did my very best at the time to make his voice heard in England, but without effect. Again, quite recently, another appeal from him has come to me. . . .

"In the month of March, 1922, I was arrested under the authority of His Excellency the Governor, Sir Edward Northey and deported to Kisumayu for detention I was not tried by any tribunal. . . .

"Is it because of my insisting, that the unmarried African girls should not be forced by Government to work on the plantations of white settlers, as it inevitably resulted in immorality and separation of domestic ties, or because I protested that my country people should not be flogged to death, etc., etc., that I have been deported? . . .

"I was simply caught hold of by the Government and deported. The rule applied to me is without doubt 'Might is Right' . . .

"I therefore pray, Sir, that you may be pleased to recommend my release, as I have already suffered a great deal. . . ."

Poor Harry Thuku! His appeal to Mr. Andrews and my publication of it in these columns will secure no relief for this victim of lust for power. If however he ever sees these lines, he will perhaps find comfort in the thought that even in distant India many will read the story of his deportation and trials with sympathy. He may also find solace in the fact that many perhaps as innocent as Harry Thuku are today locked up in Bengal without any trial or hope of it in the near future.

Young India, 18-12-1924

337. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

December 5, 1924

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

I asked Mahadev to ask you not to write as you are doing for *Young India*. And I have looked up the manuscript lying with Devdas. It is a big effort, and what a strain it must be for you. And what worries me is that you feel it obligatory. I write more every week although there is so much lying in hand. Please therefore do not worry. You are absolved from the responsibility. But you will write as the spirit moves you. At Sabarmati, I destroyed two or three of your things. I don't now remember what I destroyed. I have just now "passed" (shall I say) Harry Thuku and Untouchability with footnotes to each. I have enough with me for two numbers as yet. I destroyed your note on Egypt. It did not do justice to the subject. The British ultimatum I considered to be atrocious. But I would not write as I know nothing about Egypt. You should read what Mahomed Ali has written; say what you think of it.

I am writing this at Lahore. Hope to reach the Ashram before or on 14th and be there four days. Can you wire to Belgaum? You need not if you do not feel like it.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2615

338. SPEECH AT GOLDEN TEMPLE, AMRITSAR[1]

December 5, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi who had been presented a saropa from the Akal Takht rose amidst shouts of *Sat Sri Akal*. He spoke while sitting and the feeble voice was distinctly audible owing to the dead silence prevailing at the moment. He said that Sardar Mangal Singh had said that he had been moved to tears by his description, whereas this was not the case; for he did not weep over these troubles as he knew that greater calamities were yet to befall them. No useful purpose would be served by his weeping, for he would not be able to

[1] At a big divan in front of the Akal Takht

work. He had become stony hearted and wanted others to strengthen their hearts likewise. He knew that Punjab's new ruler was a man of a different kind and he had properly understood him (Sir Malcolm Hailey). Mahatmaji knew what the Governor wanted to do but he warned the Akalis against being duped by his speeches. He was convinced that if their forces were united they could free India in no time and then the Gurdwara problem would be settled soon. He would like to repeat what he had said when he visited Nankana Sahib immediately after the tragedy and that was that if the Sikhs strove to free the bigger Gurdwara—motherland—they could free their own shrines without much ado. The Hindus, the Mohammedans and the Sikhs should not work in different directions. He had told everything to Sardar Mangal Singh about the Gurdwara question but he wanted to say one thing here. They called their struggle by the name of satyagraha. In fact, satyagraha and non-co-operation were not two things. Satyagraha meant the "force of truth" which could not be crushed by any other force, for if this could be undermined, God could as well be crushed and this, he believed to be an impossibility. Only impurity undermined the truth, while in truth there was no place for impurities. Similarly in satyagraha there was nothing impure. They should not conceal anything in this. If they got some money or paper they should not conceal it from the public. The only condition for satyagraha is that every work should be conducted in a truthful manner. He had heard complaints against the Hindus from the Mohammedans and *vice versa* complaints against the Sikhs and *vice versa*. These communities and the sects were warring with one another. In the struggle for satyagraha they should remove all differences, for they should look to the opportunity. He alone was a soldier or a General who would look to the best opportunity. They should even bend their heads before another if time demanded that. Sir Malcolm Hailey wanted to crush them by uniting their other sects while in his utterances he declared he did not want to undermine the Sikhs and favoured Gurdwara Reform as well but they knew what was in his heart.

Passing on Mahatmaji said that he was a true non-co-operator, so long as he had faith in the Government. His creed of non-co-operation could only go when India obtained freedom. He again impressed upon the Akalis to adhere to truth and carry on their struggle with that ideal.

The Tribune, 7-12-1924

339. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, AMRITSAR[1]

December 5, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi, in replying to both the addresses jointly, said that it was with considerable difficulty that he had accepted them and its reason he had now noticed in that very meeting. When he had visited Amritsar for the first time and had toured in the country he heard people shouting *Mahatma Gandhiki jai*. He was not pleased to hear that, for the people had begun to do improper things in his name. He appealed to the people to forget his name and shout *Hindu-Mussalmanki jai*, which the audience then repeated. He said that the people should better call victory to the charkha, because no useful purpose could be served by calling his *jai*. He prayed to God that if He wanted to keep him alive, He should utilize him for some good and noble purpose and he also prayed that the Hindus and the Mohammedans should give up their differences. Even sticking to their own religion they could give up all bitterness towards the other's religion. They could carry on their *shuddhi* propaganda without saying any words against the Koran. He said that in one of the addresses they had ascribed these frictions to the leaders. This was true. For it were not the *goondas* who fought. He could prove that he was responsible for this trouble and the leaders were responsible for it. But he appealed to the people not to be misled by the leaders, because it were the people who made them their leaders.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the request asking him to stay there for some time to make up these differences and said that it were the local people who could very well do it. He could not do it, nor had he the time to stay there. He asked the people if they had forgotten the Jallianwala Bagh and the 13th of April. He said that if there could be any place which should have been immune from all such troubles it was Amritsar. He admitted that he had lost all influence; it was their work now. The Hindus and the Mohammedans did not listen to him. He was accused of showing undue favours to the Mohammedans, but the Hindus did not know that he had every right to reprimand the Hindus, while being not so much acquainted with the Mohammedan religion, he could not say anything against it which might be harmful in any way or offend their religious susceptibilities. But being a Hindu himself

[1] At Jallianwala Bagh under the presidentship of Dr. Sant Ram Seth; a joint address of welcome was presented by the Muslim League, Khilafat Committee, the local Congress Committee, Central Sikh League, Hindu Sabha, Citizens' Association, Maharashtra Samaj and Gujarat Mitra Mandal. Another address was presented by the volunteers and young men of Amritsar who had returned from jail.

and a staunch *sanatani*, he understood his own religion and could say very well anything against it. He was accused of criticizing the Arya Samaj and not attending the Sanatana Dharma Conference at Rawalpindi while he had come to attend the Khilafat Conference. He admitted that he favoured other religions over his own out of reverence for the other religions though he was true to his own. He appealed to other people to adhere to the truth, and he himself considered falsehood as violence. If he spoke an untruth he deserved to be killed. Hindus asked him what they would do if the Kabulis invaded India. He would advise them not to be afraid of the Kabulis, because they were their brothers. They should honour the Kabulis and bow their heads before them. They should have forbearance.

The Tribune, 7-12-1924

340. SPEECH AT KHILAFAT CONFERENCE, AMRITSAR[1]

December 6, 1924

Mahatmaji rose amid deafening cries of *Hindu-Muslimki jai* and said that he perforce interfered in their deliberations. He had to go to Lahore to confer with other leaders on the Hindu-Muslim problem. Mahatmaji said that it was wrong to say that the *goondas* were responsible for the riots, on the contrary the leaders, viz., Dr. Kitchlew, the Ali Brothers, Hakim Sahib and other leaders were equally responsible. Their brain even partook in them. He desired the change of hearts and the return of the cordial relations between the two communities that prevailed before. The remarks passed by the President (Mr. Zafar Ali) regarding certain Hindu leaders in order to extol the speakers, were like a bomb to him and were not right. He was not great and did not like to hear his praise. The remarks against Pandit Malaviyaji had greatly touched him and had broken his heart. He could never believe that Malaviyaji was the enemy of the Mohammedans and a block in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity. He wanted to change their opinion regarding Malaviyaji who was held in very great esteem and affection by the Hindus, and consequently the reviling of Pandit Malaviya would not bring them nearer the solution. People had greater faith in Malaviyaji than in him whom they had come to regard as a Mohammedan which was only their mistake.

It was impossible for the Hindus to desert Malaviyaji just in the same way as the Mohammedans were not prepared to give up Hakim Ajmal Khan and the Ali Brothers at his (the Mahatma) bidding. He reminded the audience that the Hindus too felt sorry at the death of Bi-Amma. He appealed to the

[1] In answer to Zafar Ali's attack on Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lajpat Rai and other Hindu leaders that they did not like Hindu-Muslim unity though ostensibly in favour of it.

Mohammedans to remember the teachings of their Prophet in the matter of the cordial treatment of even their enemy, and of reposing confidence in him for the lapse of a year or two would change his heart. His remarks about Pandit Malaviya applied equally to Lala Lajpat Rai whose heart he knew full well. He always stopped with Lalaji whenever he went to Lahore, and could say that he (Lalaji) was a strong advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. But he, the speaker, wanted it to be made known to all that he did not want to make an enemy of a Hindu who did not like to remain on friendly terms with a Mohammedan, and the same was his position with regard to a Mohammedan adopting similar attitude towards a Hindu. The Hindus informed him that they were afraid of the Afghan invasion. He on his part was not the least afraid of it, for it could take away his head from him but not his religion. This fear of the Hindus was unfounded. There were a few Urdu papers in this Province which, in the opinion of the Mahatma, spread poison and were taking great part in cutting at the root of the Hindu-Muslim unity. It was really shameful to look at them. If the Mussalmans wanted to safeguard Islam, they should unite with the Hindus. Appealing to the Hindus, Mahatmaji remarked that they could not drive the entire body of Mohammedans out of India. Their very existence demands unity with the Mohammedans. India was responsible for destroying the independence of other free countries, and our freedom will put an end to foreign exploitation of India and will secure Hindu-Muslim unity. The work of the leaders lay in the union of the hearts of the two communities and in the befriending of the weak and the strong. The speaker invoked divine aid for that end and for the change in heart.

The Hindustan Times, 12-12-1924

341. *CONVOCATION ADDRESS AT PUNJAB QAUMI VIDYAPITH, LAHORE*[1]

December 6, 1924

On rising to speak, Mahatma Gandhi was greeted with deafening shouts of *jais*. As owing to his weak state he had to deliver the speech sitting, a chair was placed on the platform in which he took his seat. He spoke in Hindi in a clear voice which was heard everywhere in the hall.

He began by referring to the vow that the new graduates had taken and prayed to God to grant them strength to avoid everything calculated to harm their creed or country. He congratulated them on their getting their degrees

[1] At its third convocation held at Bradlaugh Hall; Madan Mohan Malaviya and Shaukat Ali also attended.

and asked them always to keep in view the goal of swaraj for their country, whatever line of work they might wish to take up.

The Registrar had asked him to suggest something at Belgaum to infuse greater vigour in the national institutions all over the country. He could not say what suggestion he would make at Belgaum. He had said in *Young India* that between the educated community and himself there was an ever-widening gulf.[1] He, however, did not lose hope. That gulf was inevitable. The Registrar had quoted Lord Macaulay on the one aim of the current system of education. There was no doubt that Lord Macaulay's aim had not been fully achieved. As Lalaji[2] had told them, the one thing that everybody recognized was that theirs was an age-long civilization. It was, therefore, impossible to enslave them for all time.

Continuing, he said that he had been seeing for 40 years the results of the current system of education. There was a time when he was himself infatuated with this sytem and had helped several persons in South Africa in being called to the Bar. But he was disillusioned. He had read the opinion of an American writer that the future lay with those nations whose sons and daughters realized the dignity of manual labour and treated it as part of their educational system.

Tolstoy called it "Bread Labour". In *Bhagavad Gita* also it is said that whosoever eats his bread without offering the necessary daily sacrifice was verily a thief.[3] This sacrifice (*yajna*) was, Mahatma Gandhi said, body labour for the sake of the race; and he was borne out in this interpretation by a learned pandit. The speaker found the same in the Koran and the Parsi scriptures. The Khilafat of old used to labour to live and spent the rest of their time in religious work. So Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that he who did not do that *tapasya* had no right to live. Mere stuffing the brain with various facts and then distributing them was not education. In the Gujarat Vidyapith they had a motto that "education (*vidya*) was that which got them freedom". Here, the Registrar had stated, some parents of schoolboys objected to their children being taught manual labour, because they would not labour. Hindus and Mohammedans also were fighting for Government appointments. This he called *haram*.

The education they were receiving was merely of the brain and not of the heart, by which latter was meant religious instruction, which, again, was not the mere learning of scriptures, but connoted the true realization of God and the refusal to bow in fear except to Him. True education, that is, of the heart, once obtained would remove all fear of one another or of the "mighty" Government, since there would be the realization that God was with one. He asked

[1] *Vide* "May God Help", 26-11-1924.
[2] Lajpat Rai, the chancellor of the Vidyapith
[3] III, 12

the students if they had obtained that education, if they were prepared to perform the humblest task, and in case they agreed that charkha was essential for the country's freedom, whether they spun each day and that as a *yajna*. If that was so, then alone they had got true education.

Proceeding, he expressed his belief that if every son and every daughter of India took to spinning for at least half an hour each day and gave the yarn to the Congress to make cloth to be distributed among the poor, they could free their country. But they had not yet got that national consciousness. If they wanted swaraj for the lowest among them, who was ill-fed and ill-clad, they must take to spinning. He did not object to their reading Shakespeare or Milton, or chanting Vedic hymns or studying the Koran; but, as Hazrat Mohammed had said in the Koran, those that were neglectful of the humbler folk were very far away from God. It was this that was essential for their national education. With him this alone was true education.

If at that time he advised the suspension of non-co-operation as a national programme, it was not because he wanted the continuance of the vicious system of education. Poet Tulsidas had taught him that there could be no friendship, love, or union between religion and irreligion. Therefore, so long as he believed that the Government was Satanic and was based on arrogant exploitation of weak races so long it was his duty to non-co-operate and he would stick to that course even if he stood alone. But he would tell anarchists, if any were present there, that he wanted non-violent non-co-operation and not violent, that his non-co-operation was directed against the system and not the men administering the system.

He had no complaint against Lord Reading or Sir Malcolm Hailey as men although he had heard that Sir Malcolm Hailey was at that time fast spreading his net over the whole of the Punjab. He did not say that Sir Malcolm knew that he was doing so. But the speaker, who had studied this Government for a long time, knew this. Besides, how could Sir Malcolm know? Only the wearer knew where the shoe pinched.

But, continued Mahatmaji, the non-co-operation that was itself vicious was not worth having; and such was the feeling of mutual non-co-operation amongst Hindus and Mussalmans which was full of hatred and fear, and devoid of peace and love. They should pray to God to be saved from such non-co-operation.

His agreeing to preside at Lahore or at Belgaum was not to be taken as an indication of any consciousness of self-importance. He, on the contrary, realized that he was, perhaps, a "spent bullet". He knew, a large part of educated India was not with him. They might shout '*Mahatma Gandhiki jai*', but that could not make him happy. If, instead, they even spat at him but did as he asked them, he would feel a happy man.

Concluding, he asked if the Punjabis could take up the charkha. It was sad for him to hear from Punjab Hindus that khaddar was *haram* for them as

Muslim weavers had woven it. Thus far had their mutual non-co-operation gone! He was himself anxious to bring Mohammedan weavers back to their calling, and appealed to all to take to charkha with a burning faith. The Mussalmans, on the other hand, wanted khaddar to be fine like muslin and cheap as the Manchester fabrics. He would warn both such Hindus and Mussalmans that unless they realized the message of khaddar there would be no swaraj.

The Tribune, 9-12-1924

342. THIRTEEN COMMANDMENTS

Christianity lays down ten commandments for observance. For his love of the untouchables I have called Shri Amritlal Thakkar their high priest. His sense of service knows no limits and now he has chosen to work among the Bhils. Whatever he has, by experience, found essential, he has printed in large beautiful letters by way of commandments or teachings. These have been published in the Bhils' own dialect. I need not reproduce all but I would give here some of them; now, for instance, the first commandment says:

> Take not to *haro*[1]; if you drink *haro* the children will die of cold and hunger.
>
> COMMANDMENT 3: Take a daily bath, you will have a light heart, you will not suffer from any skin disease and Babadev's grace will be upon you.

The Bhils seem to refer to God as Babadev.

> COMMANDMENT 5: Drink fresh filtered water. Babadev will keep the guinea-worm off from you.
>
> COMMANDMENT 6: You shall not accept money when you give away your daughter in marriage. Money from the sale of daughters shall bring you grief.
>
> COMMANDMENT 9: Steal not, nor practise deceit, lest Babadev send you famine.

The thirteenth and last commandment runs as follows:

> Daily when the sun goes down pray to Babaram. There is no one else like Babaram. So be the guru's command.

Several of these commandments may well be adopted by us. A noteworthy feature of these commandments is the small, appealing reason appended to each.

[1] An intoxicating drink

May Amritlal Thakkar's services bear fruit and may [our] Bhil brothers grow in goodness!

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-12-1924

343. WITH WHAT EXPECTATION?

The reader must have concluded that if among my other pre-occupations I have accepted the chairmanship of the Kathiawar Political Conference, it could not be without some expectations —whether high or low.

The temptation to pay a flying visit to Kathiawar is of course always there. However, I could have fulfilled that desire some other time, and without taking on the burden of chairmanship. I hope that Kathiawar would clear itself of the charge levelled against it of indifference to khadi. The gentlemen who approached me have assured me that in Sonegarh I will find only a khadi-clad town and thousands will attend the conference dressed in khadi.

I will regard whatever I get as a gain and accept it; but let me repeat here what Tilak Maharaj said in replying to the late Mr. Montagu[1]: "I shall accept what I get and fight for more." Cotton grown in Kathiawar is sent out and Kathiawar wears the clothes made of the same and sent to it from outside—this should be regarded as intolerable. And, just as cotton goes out of the province, the people of Kathiawar go to other parts for want of a living there—how can this be tolerated?

What kind of injustice is it that the weavers of Kathiawar cannot earn a living, the poor women of Kathiawar are in misery in the absence of spinning? In this matter I find both the rulers and the ruled guilty. If the rulers so desire, they could utilize the cotton grown in their own States and revive hand-spinning and many other allied crafts.

Have I not seen the skilled weavers of Kathiawar at Porbandar? Today, their trade has almost been wiped out. In my time, Kathiawar satin competed with and surpassed the satin made in Ahmedabad. I have seen with my own eyes the Khatris of Kathiawar bringing their tie and dye work to the *havelis*[2] and making good use of their time. Where are they now? The *zari* saris of Kathiawar were famous. I knew the artisans who wove

[1] E. S. Montagu (1879-1924); Secretary of State for India, 1917-22

[2] *Vaishnava* places of worship

them. Where are they today? Forty years ago I used to see the dyers of Kathiawar in the suburbs of Rajkot and I still remember my innocent childhood desire, namely, "How nice it would be if my father bought me a turban of such colours!" I wonder where those dyers are today.

With the disappearance of hand-spinning, who knows how many allied trades have been ruined? Who can count them? Are we aware that with the disappearance of hand-spinning, the arts also have died out? Do we city-dwellers even consider the fact that with the dying out of arts the light has gone out of hundreds of thousands of farmers' homes? The prosperity accompanying the spinning-wheel has departed along with it. In the homes where it has been revived, prosperity is trying to return. It has not yet settled down, as there is no firm faith in the spinning-wheel in those homes. "What shall be my plight if my yarn does not find a market? How can you trust these Congressmen? These people may do one thing today and another tomorrow. Does the Government support them?" They are afraid of this unstable situation. Our pitiable condition today is like that of a burnt child who dreads the fire.

In these circumstances, I have been filled with the hope that Kathiawar will take up the cause of khadi and give it added prestige.

The second expectation is as innocent and keen and also religious. Perhaps this second hope is more religious. The untouchability in Kathiawar had defeated even Krishna the cowherd who ate the simple food of Vidura[1], who took out herds of cows for grazing, who won the innocent hearts of the *gopis*[2] and who was the lord of their pious souls. Is it possible that he who joyfully embraced Sudama clad in rags would regard outcastes as untouchables?

However, in his very Saurashtra, outcastes are treated with contempt today. Their touch is considered to be polluting and some good Kathiawaris do not desist even from abusing or beating them! Who would be their friend? I shall hope that those who attend the Conference will not only be free from this offence but will pledge themselves to serve the outcastes.

I must inform the organizers that if the outcastes are kept away from any portion of the *pandal*, the chairman will have to be

[1] A son of Vyasa by a Sudra girl; an adviser to both Kauravas and Pandavas

[2] Milk-maids

given a seat where the outcastes would be seated and he will be happy sitting there. There is no untouchability in Hinduism. It is my firm conviction that the religion which permits untouchability is not religion but irreligion. A human being is not polluted by the touch of another being but rather by tickling and nurturing the evil propensities within him.

However, delegates may wonder what has all this to do with a political conference. I have very often pointed out that there are no three distinct things, subjects like political, social and religious. The word 'political' denotes the relationship between the ruler and the ruled; 'social' suggests the internal structure of society; 'religious' indicates the duties of an individual. But on the strength of the law that what applies to an individual is also true of the universe, we can say that what is true of an individual is also true of society and what holds good for society also holds good for the ruler and the ruled. Where there is no dharma there can be no victory but only destruction. It may have the appearance of victory but it would turn out to be as illusory as a mirage. The ruler will be what the community makes him and a community will be what individuals make it. The individual is at the root of all and the existence of the individual depends on dharma alone. It is for this very reason that *rishis* and *munis* have chanted: "Wherever there is dharma, there is victory."

We shall certainly consider in the Conference the relations between the rulers and the ruled but, without clearly understanding the duties of the community, I hold it impossible to consider properly the dharma of the rulers and the ruled.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-12-1924

344. SAVE COTTON

The very first step in spinning is the stocking of cotton. Sowing of cotton comes even before that. We shall not, however, consider that because cotton is sown extensively all over India. The sad part of the story is that, despite the sowing of so much cotton, instead of stocking it, the farmers, who do not know how to put it to proper use, are tempted to sell it for the high price it fetches and do not realize that ultimately they have to pay back even higher prices.

However, we shall consider this on some other occasion. At the moment it is enough to know that cotton is yet to be harvested. Before it is sold for export wise farmers should store it and such wise men and women should persuade those who are unenlightened.

Just as we collected funds in 1921, we should now collect cotton and have it spun and woven. I have no doubt that this will be more fruitful than collecting funds. Money multiplies only through interest and the latter is the wealth of the idle. Farm products increase through labour which is the wealth of the industrious. We, men and women of the middle-classes, have not realized the value of manual labour at all. Through labour, we can bring together all people. If we have a stock of cotton and can get persons who wish to serve the country to work on it, we can to that extent raise the value of cotton as much as we choose.

If cotton is got as a gift and labour too is given as a gift, it is easy to see that we can sell khadi at a very low price. This will not actually happen because, in organizing the production, some workers must devote not half an hour but their entire time. It is obvious that they cannot work without payment. If, however, we can get thousands to contribute half an hour's labour, we can achieve much with the help of a few paid workers. But before we can think of all this we must accumulate large stocks of cotton. Hence my advice is that Congress Committees should collect as much cotton as possible. Those who do so ought to keep accounts as is done in the case of money. Not a pad of cotton should be wasted, not a wad of cotton should be allowed to fly away.

We should think of the means of storing it. It will be necessary to know how to pack that cotton. It will thus be seen that these activities are also part of the spinning programme. And

when all these things are done with a view to public good, the wise reader will easily realize what power lies in them.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-12-1924

345. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE, LAHORE[1]

December 7, 1924

In explaining how he came to accept the presidentship he read Pandit Motilalji's letter to Lalaji, wherein the former had explained how his pre-occupations prevented him from going to Lahore to preside. Panditji also had said that he was fed up with conferences and that he feared that they were nothing but empty shows. Mahatmaji fully agreed with Panditji and said Hakimji and he had come not to attend the Conference but to find a solution of the burning problem. He was told that the *Tanzeem* had said that the Conference was a purely Hindu show and that Mussalmans should stand aloof. He had not seen the particular paragraph, but he wanted to tell them that Dr. Kitchlew and the President of the Khilafat Conference as also Dr. Ansari and Hakimji and Maulanas Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali had left the Khilafat Conference to come down to Lahore to attend the Leaders' Conference.

In coming to the question of Hindu-Muslim tension, Mahatmaji said that the root cause of the tension lay in the Punjab, that all the disturbances in other parts of the country could be traced to the root cause in the Punjab, and that, therefore, the moment the Hindus and Mussalmans in the Punjab were united, there would be Hindu-Muslim unity all over India. Non-co-operation had not failed—there was no failure in non-co-operation—the Hindu-Muslim disturbances had failed them. He even felt that the question of Council-entry would not have arisen but for differences. In 1921, they felt that they were united, but it was not true unity, it was the momentary result of excitement, and it was best that they were face to face with realities today.

Hakimji and Dr. Ansari and the Ali Brothers had come not to attend the Khilafat Conference, not to attend the Provincial Conference, but to help to find out a solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. Mahatmaji said he had no other solution to offer than that of surrender on the part of one of the communities to all the political demands of the others. How, it would be asked, could a minor community, like the Sikhs, surrender all its political rights to Hindus and Mussalmans? He had not the slightest doubt that a community that had given to the world a unique lesson in non-violence, that had given evi-

[1] At its 11th session held in Bradlaugh Hall

dence of matchless sacrifice, would not find it difficult to make what really was a trifling sacrifice.

But with what face could he offer that solution to the Sikhs and the Mussalmans, when he had not been able to get it accepted by the Hindus? He claimed that he was a *sanatani* Hindu and it was as a Hindu that he offered the solution to his Hindu brethren. It was said that they would be sadly betrayed, that Mussalmans and Sikhs would take an undue advantage of the surrender. He said that they should be prepared for the contingencies. For he wanted them to share his faith, that not the betrayed but the betrayer shall perish. In essentials they may surrender not an iota. In fact he would ask them to fight either with the sword of non-violence or of violence for those essentials. He would cite the example of Pandavas of old who surrendered everything including their kingdom, and asked just enough for their stay and accommodation. They lost nothing by the surrender. He was placing before them the master-key—the key to captivate the world, viz., surrender of non-essentials. He mentioned the essentials where there could be no surrender. If Mussalmans attacked their *mandirs* and attacked their rights to worship there, then they could fight unto death. But they were ill-advised in fighting for more seats in the Councils and the Municipalities or for more posts in the services.

As a practical politician he really pitied the brave Punjabis who had bidden good-bye to their common sense to the extent of sacrificing unity in their fight for these trifles. He was there to ask the Hindus to have more faith in God and to rid themselves of fear. The only way to save their temples and the honour of their women was to die fighting for them, not to leave them to their fates and flying away. If they could not bravely die fighting for the honour of their women, they had better have a dip in the nearest river and commit suicide. But as regards non-essentials, there was no other remedy but that of surrender; that was the only way to conquer the love of the Mussalmans. It was better they accepted being slaves of Mussalmans rather than those of both the Englishmen and the Mussalmans. He wished he could reveal to them the measure of the agony burning within him. Who could quench the fire of that agony, he did not know.

To the Hindus who said that they had uniformly suffered at the hands of the Mussalmans, he would cite a few instances, e.g., from Badaun and some other places in which Hindus had also tried to retaliate. There was a good deal of exaggeration in the reports that he had heard, but he had learnt on fairly full enquiry that something had certainly been done in retaliation. He would tell them, no Hindu scripture commanded that in case a temple was broken, a masjid should be broken in turn, or because a Hindu woman was dishonoured, a Mussalman woman should in turn be dishonoured. He cited these cases not as instances of Hindu-Muslim tension, but only with a view to showing that Hindus had not lagged behind in taking retaliatory measures. But they were not evidences of communal tension, they were evidences of the devil in the

human breast. It could not be eradicated by devilry, it could be eradicated only by godly means.

In conclusion, he said that the only way of peaceful non-co-operation was the charkha to be worked by each and all, as much by M. Shaukat Ali and Sardar Mangal Singh as by himself. He wanted men to work at it no less than women. There was nothing derogatory in it. The Lancashire spindles were not worked by women, but by men. Only the lazy fought shy of charkha. For him the sole economics and politics of India was the charkha. The spinning franchise, as part of the agreement between No-changers and Swarajists, would also come before them. There was the clause of spinning by proxy for the "unwilling". It was for such men as Mr. Kelkar and Hakimji, and the Moderates. For ordinary men like the speaker and the toiling masses, spinning was a daily duty. He would ask them to support the agreement if they were heartily agreeable to spinning and wearing khaddar and not in deference to the personality of the speaker.

The Tribune, 9-12-1924

346. SPEECH AT PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE, LAHORE

December 7, 1924

In bringing the Conference to a close, Mahatma Gandhi said the national shouts, to which the people attached so much importance, were of no great value. The present was a time for work. If the people fulfilled the three conditions laid down by him—Hindu-Muslim unity, khaddar and spinning and removal of untouchability—India would surely advance towards her goal. The attainment of swaraj required resolve and strength. Resolve they had got; but they were dissipating their strength in their mutual dissensions.

Continuing, Mahatmaji said he was trying to bring about unity between the two communities. He referred to his own informal conference with Hindu and Muslim leaders at Lahore and said that no settlement had been arrived at yet. But many a step towards an amicable settlement had, in fact, been taken. After referring in brief to khaddar and untouchability, Mahatmaji said that he was still convinced that the step he took at Bardoli[1] was a right step and averted a great calamity that would otherwise have befallen the country.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the implications of non-violence. He accepted it as dharma; but even if some of them accepted it as a matter of policy—and so long as they do so—they should be true to it.

[1] Suspension of satyagraha following Chauri Chaura riots; *vide* Vol. XXII.

Concluding, Mahatmaji thanked the conveners of the conference and others for having made him the president.

The Tribune, 10-12-1924

347. SPEECH AT RAWALPINDI

December 9, 1924

At the outset he referred to the address of welcome that had been presented to him and said that as long as he or Shaukat Ali could speak on behalf of the whole of India, it was enough to present an address to one of them; but today:

My own authority to speak on behalf of the Muslims is dwindling. So is Shaukat Ali's to speak on behalf of the Hindus. This is unfortunate. But as long as this unfortunate state of affairs lasts, you have to present addresses to both.

Referring to the Kohat tragedy, he said:

I do not wish to inquire today into the origin of this tragedy or to apportion blame for it. For one thing, I am not aware of all the facts. This much is, however, obvious that some two to three thousand Hindus have left Kohat and, seeking shelter, have camped at Rawalpindi. The responsibility for their forced exodus from Kohat rests with Hindus as well as Muslims; and both the communities will be disgraced as long as they continue to camp at Rawalpindi. Shaukat Ali, Kitchlew, Zafar Ali and I have come here to remove this disgrace. We have not succeeded yet because the third party is playing its cards. The third party's role is to fan, if not also to kindle, the flames of conflict. I have never yet heard of any conflict being resolved by this third party. The truth is that the tragedy at Kohat would not have occurred and Hindus would not have run away if the Government had done its duty. The officers there either became cowards or acted contrary to their duty. The bandits on the frontier rob anyone and everyone; hence it is difficult to assert that all this storm was raised for looting the Hindus only. I would, however, affirm that the looting and arson was perpetrated not by the people but by the officials of the frontier. I wish that this Government should for ever neglect its duty as it has done on this occasion at Kohat. I would not be sorry if this Government collapses and then Hindus and Muslims fight a civil war and loot each other to their heart's content. As long as there are rancour, weakness and fear in the hearts of both the communities, they will fight each other and cause rivers of blood to flow. In

the end the leaders of the two communities will realize that their actions are irreligious and they will calm down. But today we are fighting with the help of the third party. You should understand that we shall be doomed for ever to remain their slaves if we fight with their help. If you understand the significance of Hindu-Muslim unity, you should let go the third party. I would say only this to you, you should prepare yourself to die with Rama's name on your lips if the Government is furious with you and incites the Muslims. Today the officials of the Government taunt you and tell you, "Go to Shaukat Ali" or "Go to Gandhi". I regret, none of us can be of any help today since we have no sword. I have thrown it away and Shaukat Ali has sheathed it. Therefore, we can only advise you to set your minds free if you wish to attain independence. One can be destroyed only by oneself, never by another. You might say that this advice would lead only to ruin; and could help no one. My answer is: "I am recommending the way to ruin; I am talking only of self-sacrifice."

I would ask the frontier Hindus in a locality with 95 per cent of Muslims never to seek the advice of the Government. You should return only if the frontier Muslims request you to do so, if they desire to take you back after assuring the perpetual preservation of your life and honour. You have been staying there for many generations. How can you stay there without their consent? You have earned your livelihood there, you have carried on trade there. How can you stay there in peace and comfort without their co-operation and goodwill? No Government can guarantee safety against a majority community. Even when swaraj is attained, and Shaukat Ali is the Commander-in-Chief and I am the Viceroy, if somebody were to ask me to protect a community, I would say that I could not protect it from a community comprising 95 per cent of the population. Where the Muslims constitute 5 per cent of the population, I would say the same thing to them. That is the only way to stay in the frontier with honour and goodwill.

I wish to say to you one thing before leaving. You should tell the Government that you would not move from here as long as you do not come to terms with the Muslims and they do not invite and conduct you there. If the refugees from Kohat are willing to accept this advice of mine, I would give them a public pledge: "I am prepared to come and stay here with the refugees from Kohat after the Belgaum session and to tour with them throughout India." But if they return to Kohat on the assurance of the Government, it would do serious damage to them and to both the Hindus and the Muslims. Even if the Government returns all property or

pays Rs. 3 crores in compensation, returning to Kohat under its protection would harm both Hindus and Muslims. If you return in spite of my advice, my hands are bound to be weakened in the Congress. May God give you the strength to unite with the Muslims.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 14-12-1924

348. *MY PUNJAB DIARY*

Not by Choice

It was not by choice but by necessity that I undertook to preside at the Punjab Provincial Conference.[1] The Punjabis wanted an outsider to preside and if at all possible Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The Maulana Sahib however was unwilling. He said he would gladly attend but thought he would be more useful if he remained free. The Maulana's position was appreciated. Pandit Motilalji was then approached. He was good enough to say he would preside, if he was not prevented by any untoward event, and if Pandit Motilalji was prevented from presiding I was to fill in his place. Unfortunately the unexpected happened and Pandit Motilalji could not come. As the reasons given by him are of public importance, I set them forth in his own language.

"Fed Up"

In his letter to Lalaji he says:

> There has been serious misapprehension about my acceptance of the presidentship of the Punjab Provincial Conference. Mahatmaji and I had agreed in Bombay that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the most suitable president, but that in case he could not be made to agree I was to take his place. I received news of the serious illness of my daughter-in-law and had to leave abruptly with an expert obstetrician. The Maulana Sahib came out of the meeting hall with me and I told him distinctly that my Punjab and Nagpur engagements were off and that he must preside at the Punjab Conference and fix some other date for Nagpur. I came away under the impression that he would consult Mahatmaji and fix upon someone else to preside if he himself was unwilling to do so. . . .

[1] *Vide* "Presidential Address at Punjab Provincial Conference, Lahore", 7-12-1924.

As soon as Jawahar's wife was pronounced to be out of danger, I turned my attention to the communal situation in Allahabad and made up my mind to do what I could while waiting in Allahabad under orders from Calcutta. I found the situation to be as bad as it could be and was almost bombarded from all sides with bitter complaints at my continued absence from my own city and province. I assured them that I would give ample compensation by working for them for a whole fortnight.

I set about immediately to make good this assurance. . . . I took up my old idea of organizing a Hindu-Muslim *sangathan* and giving it a start from Allahabad. The first step taken was to approach the university professors and students. . . . At the meeting with the professors it was decided to take steps to use the Social Serivce Branch as a nucleus for the Hindu-Muslim *sangathan*. . . . From tomorrow I am to visit the *muhallahs* personally and also speak to batches of students, who have been invited to Anand Bhawan at certain hours. . . .

You will see that the above programme involves solid work and wholly eliminates the showy part, which unfortunately has come to be the only part of our public work in these days. To tell you the honest truth I am completely fed up with conferences which are passing shows of the moment and invariably result in nothing substantial. The Nagpur disputes are ripe for decision and letters received from Nagpur show urgent necessity for the arbitrators (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and myself) meeting and deciding the dispute before the Belgaum Congress. I have sent two wires to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at Calcutta proposing the 15th but have received no reply from him.

I have written at this length to you to give you an accurate idea of the work I have laid out for myself and I hope you will agree that a visit to the Punjab at this juncture would not be as profitable.

I share to the fullest extent Panditji's horror of conferences. Not that they are always useless. They were absolutely necessary at a certain stage in our career. But they have in their present form almost outgrown their usefulness. Even when they do no other harm, they mean waste of money and time. The public spirit awakened by them needs to be consolidated into efficient work which can best be done by small committees. These latter to be useful must be harmonious and ever responsive to and by their solidly active work in touch with the general public. Abandonment of conferences should never be due to public apathy, but it should be because the public is more usefully engaged. For instance, it would be folly to call people who are engaged in khaddar production to pass resolutions on subjects on which the public is known to be in agreement. It would be equally unwise to call away those who are, say, enaged in organizing relief in famine-stricken areas.

Panditji himself was more usefully employed in organizing peace brigades in Allahabad. And if he succeeds in forming genuine Hindu-Muslim *sangathans*, he will have done service of a first class order to the country. His decision to work from the bottom, instead of through middlemen, must result in nothing but better relations between Hindu and Mussalman masses.

My Real Business

The Conference was an incidental business for me. My real work lay among representative Hindus and Mussalmans. I had therefore no hesitation in appealing to the audience at the Khilafat Conference at Amritsar to suspend its sitting for the morning following till the afternoon of that day to enable the leaders there present to attend the informal meeting of representatives on the morning of the 8th. To my great joy the whole audience adopted my suggestion for the waiting. And Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, the President, Dr. Kitchlew and others with much inconvenience to themselves came to Lahore for the meeting.

The Result

It is hardly necessary for me to inform the reader that the meeting was arranged for the sole purpose of considering the ways and means of easing the tension between Hindus and Mussalmans and of establishing real peace between the two communities. Among Mussalman outsiders, Hakim Sahib Ajmal Khan, the Ali Brothers and Dr. Ansari were present, and among Hindu outsiders Panditji Madan Mohan Malaviya was present. The discussion centred on the political causes of the tension. For they seemed to be the predominant if not the only causes of tension between the educated classes in the Punjab. Lalaji told me with great sorrow that whereas formerly there were cordial social relations between educated Mussalmans and educated Hindus, now there was growing estrangement. The meeting therefore discussed the advisability of revising the Lucknow Pact. The Punjab Mussalmans hold that we have outgrown the Lucknow Pact, if it was not a blunder in the very inception. They claim that whilst the communal feelings run high and mutual distrust exists:

1. There should be communal representation on a population basis at least under a common electorate or separate if necessary.

There seemed to me to be general agreement among them that separate electorate should be resorted to only at the instance of minorities.

2. There should be no favoured treatment to any sect, i.e., no sect should be represented above its numerical proportion.

3. The same formula should be applied to local bodies as to the legislative.

4. On all public services the different communities should be proportionately represented with due regard to efficiency. Wherever therefore any community is unrepresented, all future appointments, whether new or to fill up vacancies, should be so made as to regularize the proportionate representation. In other words there should be no class favouritism or class preference.

The Mussalman friends present made it clear that they merely gave their individual opinions. They did not bind anybody but themselves and their opinion was subject to revision if any other community claimed special or favoured treatment.

5. Any solution must be an all-India solution and must be by the consent of all India.

The Sikh friends contended that their special position and importance in the Punjab required special treatment, i.e., excessive representation if there was any communal representation at all in the Punjab. They said that they would be quite satisfied if communal representation was entirely given up and even if not one Sikh found place in the Legislature or elsewhere.

The Hindu position seemed to be that there should be no communal representation at all, but that if there was to be any it should be under a joint electorate. The Hindu position was not crystallized. The Punjabi Hindus seemed to dread, at the back of the Mussalman demand, a sinister design on the part of the Mussalmans. In fact there is a vague fear in their minds that if the Mussalmans gain a decisive majority in the administration of the Punjab, the proximity of the warlike Mussalman tribes would constitute a most formidable menace to the Punjab in particular and to India in general.

Such is, as briefly and as accurately as is possible for me to put, the real position of the respective communities. In these circumstances, it was not possible to press the advance to an immediate solution. I am hoping that at Belgaum there would be a more formal gathering of representatives to consider the whole position and to find an acceptable and national solution of the thorny problem.

The Conference

There was nothing notable about the Conference save the fact that the delegates both at the Subjects Committee and at the Conference gave me the utmost assistance. Even those who disagreed with me extended the greatest forbearance. I single out this fact,

because obedience to the authority of the chair is such an essential factor in the growth of a healthy public life. The greatest caution should no doubt be exercised in the choice of a chairman, but when one has been selected he must command implicit courtesy and obedience. The only way to deal with a refractory, vascillating or partial chairman is to move, with becoming respect, a vote of no confidence and remove him from the chair. In well-ordered society the honour is not to the person but to the position. The fundamental distinction between personal rule and organized State is that in the latter the honour is rendered to the position which is a creation of the State, i.e., the people; and thus the State goes on, no matter who is called to rule or preside. To put it in other words, every person in a well-ordered State is fully conscious of both his responsibility and of his rights. The stability of a State depends upon the readiness of every citizen to subordinate his rights to those of the rest. He knows that the rights follow, as a matter of course, the performance of duty. The State is the sum total of the sacrifice on its behalf of its members. But whilst I place on record my gratitude to the delegates for their courtesy and attention, I would like to mention that there is still at our meetings an unconscious lack of self-restraint. It is indispensable for meetings, public or private, that those who attend them do not all talk at once nor whisper to one another, but that they listen to what is being said. The whole value of meetings is lost if people are not attentive. The reader will recognize the reasonableness as well as the selfishness of these remarks. I want to prepare the ground for Belgaum. All those who attend the Congress and conferences at Belgaum, please note.

The Conference went through its work in seven hours on Sunday the 7th instant, 8 to 11 in the morning, and 4 to 8 in the evening. The Subjects Committee took six hours. The work was done expeditiously, because no time was lost waiting for anybody. The proceedings were started punctually at the appointed times so far as the Conference was concerned.

The Convocation

The previous day, i.e., the 6th was devoted to the meeting of the representatives, the inevitable but taxing procession, and the convocation of the National University.[1] Degrees were conferred upon the successful students, who recited the following oath in Hindustani, which was administered by Lala Lajpat Rai in his

[1] *Vide* "Convocation Address at Punjab Qaumi Vidyapith, Lahore", 6-12-1924.

capacity as Chancellor : "I solemnly declare that I shall do nothing in my lifetime that would injure my religion or country." Among the students who received their degrees was one girl and one Mussalman. The ceremony was impressive, but I could not help feeling all the while I was awarding the diploma that I was a square man in a round hole. My notions of education are so revolutionary and, as must appear to my critics, so crude. I can only think of national education in terms of swaraj. Hence I would have even the collegiates devote their attention to perfecting themselves in the art of spinning and all it means. I would have them study the economics and implications of khaddar. They should know how long it takes to establish a mill and the capital required. They should know too the limitations on the possibility of an indefinite expansion of mills. They should know too the method of distribution of wealth through mills and that through hand-spinning and hand-weaving. They should know how hand-spinning and the manufacture of Indian fabrics was destroyed. They should understand and be able to demonstrate the effect of the adoption of hand-spinning in the cottages of the millions of India's peasants. They should know how a full revival of this cottage industry will weave into an undivided whole the sundered Hindu and Mussalman hearts. But these ideas are either behind the time or in advance of it. It does not much matter whether they are behind or ahead of the time. This I know that some day or other the whole of educated India will adopt them.

A Martial Law Prisoner

The reader will recall the names of Messrs Ratanchand and Bugga Chaudhary, the two martial law prisoners who were sentenced to be hanged and on whose behalf Pandit Motilalji took an appeal to the Privy Council. The reader will remember further that though the appeal was dismissed, the death sentences were commuted to life sentences. Now Mr. Bugga Chaudhary has been brought back from the Andamans to the Multan Jail whereas Mr. Ratanchand, I understand, is still kept in the Andamans. I had a visit from Mr. Bugga's mother-in-law. She informed me that Mr. Bugga has been long suffering from hernia and piles and for the last three months has been suffering from fever. During the palmy days of non-co-operation, I used to tell the relatives of these prisoners that they would be soon released. I felt sorry this time not to be able to hold out any hope to the mother-in-law of the early release of her son-in-law although he is ailing and has already served five years of imprisonment. In analysing the evidence

given at the trial of these two gentlemen, I had expressed my conviction that there was nothing in it warranting conviction for murder. The Privy Council, it will be remembered, did not go into the merits of the cases. Their Lordships threw out the appeal on what may be called technical grounds.

Young India, 11-12-1924

349. A WARNING

During the next few months every householder will have his choice. By refusing or neglecting to stock cotton for domestic use, he will indirectly and in many cases directly be a party to sending away most of the cotton grown in India out of the country and selling some of it to the mills. Or by stocking sufficient cotton he can promote hand-spinning and bring swaraj nearer to the extent of each householder's solid work for hand-spinning. This choice comes every year to everyone in India and that during the cotton season. Congressmen can do double work. They may instruct every householder in the performance of the primary duty of stocking enough cotton. And seeing that all the householders are not yet alive to their duty, they may also stock sufficient cotton for the sake of the defaulters. This can be done either by begging or by buying. We have had many *mushti*[1] funds more or less successful. There is no reason why in all cotton-growing areas cotton should not be begged from door to door. Wherever such corporate collection is made, the collection should be treated exactly in the same way as we would treat cash collection. Receipts should be passed to donors and books of account should be kept. Stocking should be thoroughly effective. Special skill will be needed for classifying and conserving cotton. Now is the time for storing cotton or it may be never till the return of the next season.

Young India, 11-12-1924

[1] Small handful

350. *MY PATH*

It is my good fortune and misfortune to receive attention in Europe and America at the present moment. It is my good fortune in that my message is being studied and understood in the West. It is my misfortune in that it is also being either unconsciously exaggerated or wilfully distorted. Every truth is self-acting and possesses inherent strength. I therefore remain unperturbed even when I find myself grossly misrepresented. A kind European friend has sent me a warning which shows, if the information given to him be true, that I am being either wilfully or accidentally misunderstood in Russia. Here is the message:

> The Russian representative at Berlin, Mr. Krestinsky, would be asked by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to give an official welcome to Gandhi (?) and to "profit by the situation to undertake Bolshevik propagandist activities among his followers". Besides, Krestinsky would be given the task of inviting Gandhi to come to Russia. He is authorized to give a subsidy for the publication of propagandist literature among the oppressed peoples of Asia; and he is to found, for the purposes of the Oriental Club and Secretariat, a purse in the name of Gandhi, for students who are of his ideas (of the ideas of Gandhi or of those of Moscow?). Finally three Hindus would be enlisted in this work. All this is published in the Russian newspapers like the *Rul* of Oct. 18th.

The message gives the clue to the reports that I was likely to be invited to visit Germany and Russia. I need not say that I have received no such invitation at all, nor have I the slightest desire to visit these great countries. I am conscious of the fact that the truth for which I stand has not yet been fully accepted by India. It has not yet been fully vindicated. My work in India is still in the experimental stage. In such circumstances any foreign adventure on my part would be altogether premature. I should be fully satisfied if the experiment demonstrably succeeds in India.

My path is clear. Any attempt to use me for violent purposes is bound to fail. I have no secret methods. I know no diplomacy save that of truth. I have no weapon but non-violence. I may be unconsciously led astray for a while but not for all time. I have therefore well-defined limitations, within which alone I may be used. Attempts have been made before now to use me unlawfully more than once. They have failed each time so far as I am aware.

I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. I have not been able to study it. I do not know whether it is for the good of Russia in the long run. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success. Those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realize that however much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is, therefore, really no meeting ground between the school of violence and myself. But my creed of non-violence not only does not preclude me but compels me even to associate with anarchists and all those who believe in violence. But that association is always with the sole object of weaning them from what appears to me to be their error. For experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion.

Young India, 11-12-1924

351. ART AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT[1]

> One of the most interesting studies in human history is to trace the correspondence between the rise of a great Literature and Art and the dawn of a new national life. Music, which is akin to Literature and Art, has a similar function to perform. . . .
>
> The question remains to be considered, whether the national awakening in India of our own times gives as yet any promise of producing a great Literature and Art. The movement is too young, in many provinces of India, for us to expect to see immediate results. But no one, who has closely studied the modern history of Bengal, can doubt for a moment that a creative period has dawned there. It represents, both in literary and artistic genius, the full impulse of the soul of the people. . . .
>
> In other parts of India, the national movement is chiefly noticeable at present on account of a remarkable renaissance of Literature in the mother languages themselves. . . .
>
> On the other hand there is one thing in the national programme which strangely enough has not been able hitherto to yield itself to different creative forms of beauty, namely khaddar. . . . An absolute sameness of white, with hardly any variation at all, gives no relief to the artistic sense. . . . The vegetable dyes of ancient India might be brought

[1] From this article by C. F. Andrews, on which Gandhiji has commented, only extracts are reproduced here.

back into daily use; this land of bright unclouded skies should not be robbed of those glorious primary colours, the scarlet, the gold and the blue, with all their many variations, which only the sunshine can make harmonious. . . .

There is no danger of the colour sense being lost. That art is being taken care of by Masulipatam and other places. Tawdriness may and should disappear, as the nation develops the sense of proportion.

Young India, 11-12-1924

352. INTERVIEW TO "THE TRIBUNE"

LAHORE,
December 11, 1924

Mr. Gandhi, who left Rawalpindi this morning, passed through Lahore this evening by the Bombay Mail for Sabarmati. Interviewed by a special representative of *The Tribune* at the Lahore Railway Station on the Government of India Resolution on Kohat affairs, Mr. Gandhi said:

In company of Maulanas Shaukat Ali, Zafar Ali and Dr. Kitchlew I saw almost every one of the refugees in Rawalpindi; I have also seen Rai Bahadur Sardar Makhan Singh. I have read the resolution of the Government of India and I have not a shadow of doubt that the resolution is a challenge. I have strongly advised them not to accept any terms of settlement without reference to Hindu and Muslim leaders. At this stage, I wish to give no opinion as to the truth or otherwise of the several statements made in the resolution. Unfortunately, the Mohammedans of Kohat were not represented by any responsible person in Rawalpindi, but it is perfectly clear to me that the Government of India have arrived at conclusions upon a departmental enquiry as to the formation of which these refugees or Mussalmans had no say, nor had the refugees any opportunity given to them of establishing their case. From experience one knows how often such enquiries had been misleading and resulted in giving only a one-sided version.

The refugees are deeply grieved over the resolution. They had expected that there would be a full, open and independent enquiry at which both Hindus and Muslims would be able to have their full say. That, however, has not happened and from the Viceroy's reply to Pandit Malaviyaji it would appear that this resolution is the Government of India's final say and finding in the matter.

In the circumstances, the refugees, if they are to consult their self-respect, could never go to Kohat until there is a real and lasting settlement between themselves and the Mussalmans of Kohat. Such a settlement can never be superimposed from outside, and whatever terms either the Hindus or the Mussalmans concerned may be represented as having accepted, I can only regard as having been accepted under direct or indirect coercion. I am hoping that the Mussalmans of Kohat will see their way to meet the refugees and invite them to return to Kohat under a promise of friendship and full security. I do not wish to pre-judge the case. I am hoping, and in this I voice the sentiment of my Mussalman colleagues, that the Mussalmans of Kohat will give us an opportunity of coming at a correct decision upon the unfortunate happenings in Kohat; but this much is absolutely clear that the Hindus are today refugees at Rawalpindi and are in fear of their very existence in Kohat, should they return without a full guarantee from the Mussalman residents. I count no assurance that might be given by the Government as of consequence, if the Mussalmans are unwilling to receive the Hindus as their friends. They are in an overwhelming majority, with Mussalman tribes within a stone's throw of them, and every Indian, be he Hindu or Mussalman, expects the Mussalmans of Khoat, if they are anxious to have Hindu-Muslim unity, to give full assurance to the refugees and take them back to Kohat. I would repeat here what I have said to the refugees.[1] On their correct conduct depend the future relations between the Hindus and the Mussalmans in the Frontier Province. If they refuse to return until the Kohat Muslims have cordially invited them and assured them of full protection, it will be [well] with them. I have no doubt that all India will stand by them.

I have told them also that there should not be the slightest difficulty in their finding suitable occupation in India, should it be impossible for them to return with self-respect. I have told them, too, as soon as my present engagements are finished, which would be about the 23rd of January, I would be glad to go back to Rawalpindi and remain with them as long as it is necessary, but I have every hope that long before that time the Mussalmans of Kohat will recognize their obligation towards the refugees and take them back to Kohat. Maulana Shaukat Ali is already moving in the matter and is placing himself in touch with the Frontier Mussalmans.

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Rawalpindi", 9-12-1924.

Asked by the interviewer to state his views about the Hindu-Muslim differences in the Punjab or to suggest any remedy for the present strained feelings, Mr. Gandhi said:

I think the above statement on the Kohat affair is quite enough. There is nothing just now which strikes me [as] of paramount importance. I have fully dwelt on this question in my articles in the current issue of *Young India*[1] and I do not want to add anything more to what I have already written.

Further questioned as to the meaning and the significance of his announcement at the recent Punjab Provincial Political Conference about his new plan of attaining swaraj, Mr. Gandhi replied:

I have not seen the report of my concluding speech at the conference, but I did say that I was doing a great deal of hard thinking and trying to find out whether at least for some of us it was not possible to end this agony. What that can be, I am unable to say at the present moment, and everything depends upon how the Congress receives any proposal that I might have to make. I am still in a fog and I have grave doubts as to my ability to carry the nation with me. Beyond this, I am unable to go at the present moment, but there is no doubt in my mind that anything that I may conceive now, will have so far as I am concerned a finality about it.

Asked about his immediate future programme, Mr. Gandhi said:

I reach Sabarmati on Saturday morning. I leave Sabarmati on the 18th and reach Belgaum on the 20th and hope to meet all the No-changers who come there and all the Pro-changers who would come on the 21st. I am most anxious to have a full, free and informal discussion with all the leaders as well as the rank and file. I am most anxious that anything that is done at the Congress is not accepted mechanically, but that every delegate who assents to the resolutions that will be submitted to the Congress does so with a full conviction and under a full sense of his or her responsibility. The success of any programme will depend upon everyone working at it heart and soul.

The Tribune, 13-12-1924

[1] Dated, 18-12-1924

353. FOREWORD TO "LIFE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA"

SABARMATI,[1]
Margsheersh Krishna 1, 1981 [*December*[2] *12, 1924*]

The story of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion. Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of godliness. His sayings are not those of a mere learned man but they are pages from the Book of Life. They are revelations of his own experiences. They, therefore, leave on the reader an impression which he cannot resist. In this age of scepticism Ramakrishna presents an example of a bright and living faith which gives solace to thousands of men and women who would otherwise have remained without spiritual light. Ramakrishna's life was an object-lesson in ahimsa. His love knew no limits, geographical or otherwise. May his divine love be an inspiration to all who read the following pages.

M. K. GANDHI

Life of Sri Ramakrishna

354. "PATIDARS" AND UNTOUCHABLES

I still receive complaints from our untouchable brothers against *Patidars*. A brother has sent me cuttings wherein t e facts are supported by names and addresses. It is alleged that those untouchables who had given up the job of removing carcasses were beaten up and made to do this work.

If this is a fact, it would amount to swadeshi Dyerism, and in some respects, even worse than the foreign variety. The action of the foreigner had at least a slight excuse in the conduct of the people. There is no such excuse here. The foreigners are few in number and hence, ordinarily, they have cause for fear. In this swadeshi Dyerism, however, the *Patidars* are greater in number, while the untouchables are fewer and inferior in strength as well

[1] As given in the source; however, Gandhiji reached Sabarmati on December 13; *vide* "Letter to Mathuradas Trikumji", 14-12-1924.

[2] The source, however, mentions "November 12, 1924".

as intelligence. To use force against them is like bringing out an army against ants.

Patidars and the other so-called upper castes should reflect on their duty. No one's Dyerism will be tolerated for much longer now. Truth, justice and non-violence alone will prevail. Untruth, injustice and violence, even if they are swadeshi, will never prevail.

Today, we want justice, we wish to rid ourselves of slavery. Shall we be blind to our own faults and not get rid of them? Reasonable *Patidars* should stop those who have heaped injustice on untouchables. People should realize that we have our obligations towards the untouchable brothers. Just as other castes have given up their occupations, just as Brahmins have forsaken teaching and taken up jobs, etc., just as Kshatriyas have willingly accepted slavery, just as tailors have given up their trade and entered other fields, similarly, untouchables too have a right to give up their old occupations.

Today, the chamar's vocation has been taken up by others also. I see no impurity in carrying carcasses to where they belong. However, how could I force others to do that or any other work? We cannot obstinately insist that certain communities or persons must do certain tasks. As a direct result of this, we should not be ashamed of doing any essential service. Moreover, if no one else is obliged to do it, what sin have the poor untouchables committed [to be forced to do it]? I remember that the *Bhangis* in the South were displeased once. They stopped doing their work. The Brahmins started cleaning their own lavatories, and the *Bhangis* were discomfited. That is the best way of vanquishing others. We should silently suffer inconvenience and remove it through self-reliance, through forbearance. This way lies progress for both classes. The other course would definitely lead to the degradation of one and possibly of both.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-12-1924

355. LETTER TO A. VARADAN

December 14, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for the apology accompanying your letter and signed by Mr. Subramaniam. I have never thought of the matter. I do hope he will not be made to retire by reason of letters written by him.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

A. VARADAN, ESQ.
HEADMASTER

From a photostat: G.N. 5676

356. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Sunday, Magsar Vad 3 [*December 14, 1924*]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I received today your letter redirected from Lahore. Even if I send you a telegram now, it will reach you only tomorrow. I am therefore replying by letter only. Don't you think it [in-]advisable [not] to allow the Conference[1] to be held at Sonegarh itself? However, you may do whatever is good for all the parties concerned. As to restraint in the Conference, what assurance can I give you? I do take it for granted that none in Kathiawar will transgress the limits in my presence. From the papers I see that the Municipality has already passed a resolution to present an address. May that be changed now? I believe the presentation of the address will certainly be accomplished without any difficulty. I am here till the 18th. If anyone goes to the city, I shall send you a wire also.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3184. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

[1] Kathiawar Political Conference; *vide* "Letter to Prabhashanker Pattani", 18-12-1924.

357. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Magsar Vad 3 [December 14, 1924][1]

I arrived here yesterday. I was about to write to you when Mahadev showed me your letter. I am unhappy and wonder why Anand is not yet well. Why is it so? Tell Anand not to be in a hurry to take leave of this world. Would she agree to go for a change? I have always observed that a hundred medicines do not work as effectively as one good change. How will you come to Belgaum in this condition? I wanted to write to you to come to Belgaum. Taramati must now be completely all right.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 78

358. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON PUNJAB SPEECHES

AHMEDABAD,
December 14, 1924

I have seen a report of one of my speeches in the Punjab, and I have heard more about the reports of my speeches. I warned the reporters against reporting me without first showing their reports to me. I made what were to me important statements. The editors of *The Tribune* and the *Zamindar* did me the courtesy of letting me or my secretary revise their reports, but others evidently did not consider it necessary to respond to my request. The result is a travesty of what I did say. All I can therefore say to the public is: "Don't you believe a word of what may be reported of me unless the report is authenticated by me. For the rest, let the public await my address at Belgaum, which will summarize all I have said in the Punjab and elsewhere. I warn them against expecting anything sensational or exciting. What I desire above all else is unity and quiet constructive work for one year. Then, but not till then, I should promise much excitement for the most ardent spirits, but let me not anticipate.

New India, 15-12-1924

[1] As given in the source

359. LETTER TO KUNVERJI VITHALBHAI MEHTA

Monday [December 15, 1924][1]

I have your letter. I shall certainly try to tour Bardoli taluk after the 15th[2]. You may fix the programme in consultation with Vallabhbhai.

1. Is any spinning activity going on there?
2. How is Pragji doing?
3. Where is Kalyanji and how is he doing?
4. Does *Navayug* pay its way?
5. Do they store any cotton?
6. Is Dayalji well now?

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI KUNVERJI VITHALBHAI
"NAVAYUG" OFFICE
LIMDA CHOWK
SURAT

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2673

360. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Tuesday [December 16, 1924][3]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

Bhai Fulchand, Amritlal and other workers are here in connection with the holding of the Conference. They tell me that they are prepared to promise that the Conference will be conducted with perfect discretion. They are prepared to undertake to see that none of the Princes are subjected to personal criticism. I feel that there should be no difficulty in granting permission to hold the Conference on such conditions. If the conditions are mentioned in the order giving permission the prestige of the durbar will be maintained and his duty to the other Princes amply discharged, at the same time the people will be able to hold the

[1] From the postmark

[2] Evidently of January, 1925

[3] This letter is acknowledged by the addressee in his letter of 17-12-1924 to Gandhiji.

Conference. I believe the prohibitory order has been issued under the apprehension that due decorum would not be observed in the Conference; and if conditions are imposed to avert such an eventuality while granting permission, I believe there will be no difficulty.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3185. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

361. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI A. MODI

Magsar Vad 5 [*December 16, 1924*][1]

BHAI BHAGWANJI,

I have your letter. Good you wrote it. I shall try to follow what I can from it.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

BHAI BHAGWANJI ANUPCHAND MODI
RAJKOT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3031. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

362. MESSAGE TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

[After *December 16, 1924*][2]

I understand that the Reception Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference is ready to give an assurance to the Ruler that due decorum will be observed at the Conference and that none of the Princes will be subjected to personal criticism.

I have also come to the conclusion that before recommending to the Reception Committee that the Conference should be held at Bhavnagar the Working Committee which met at Porbandar ought to have consulted Sir Pattani. By omitting to do this they have been guilty of incivility.

Sir Prabhashanker holds strongly the view that this year the Conference should not be held at Bhavnagar. I can see that

[1] From the postmark

[2] This message seems to have been written after Gandhiji's "Letter to Prabhashanker Pattani", 16-12-1924.

he may find it difficult to permit this. He has written to me saying that if the Conference is held at Sonegarh, he will give every kind of help possible. He would even encourage subjects of the Bhavnagar State to attend the Conference. Moreover, he also promises to arrange for the next session of the Conference to be held within the State territory and give any other help required of him. His only condition is that proper restraint in speeches, etc., is maintained at this year's convention. He does not wish to impose conditions for the next year's session. He takes for granted that the Conference will, of its own accord, keep within limits.

In view of all this, the Reception Committee should not, I think, insist on holding the Conference at Bhavnagar. They should respond to Sir Pattani's request and prove themselves to be true satyagrahis by maintaining perfect discipline at the Conference.

If the people take this course of action they will have nothing to be ashamed of. It will not discredit satyagraha and will moreover make things easy for the future. But suppose everything goes awry, Sir Pattani goes back on his word, or he is not in Kathiawar then, or in spite of his best efforts he fails to enable the Conference to hold its session within the territory of the State, even then the satyagrahis will have nothing to lose. A true satyagrahi is never weary of showing modesty and courtesy and he never has to repent for a "lost opportunity". He is ever ready to answer the call.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

From a copy: C.W. 6204. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

363. LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN

December 17, 1924

DEAR MR. NATESAN,

My wishes for a bright future for your *Review* are with you.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

The Indian Review, January, 1925

364. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

Magsar Vad 6 [December 17, 1924][1]

BHAI DAHYABHAI,

I have both your letters. I feel like writing, but what can I write without all the necessary information? I do not like to write without the support of solid facts. Now you may come to me after I return from Belgaum and explain the thing to me.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

BHAI DAHYABHAI MANORDAS PATEL
TALUK SAMITI
DHOLKA

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2691. Courtesy: D. M. Patel

365. LETTER TO THE "FORWARD"

[About *December 17, 1924*][2]

DEAR FRIEND,

Here is my article: There is no swaraj without the spinning-wheel. I do not keep any portrait of mine. So you should be satisfied with the autograph of

M. K. GANDHI

The Story of My Life, Vol. II, p. 499

366. NOTES

IS LALAJI A COWARD?

I suppose I share the misfortune of many a public speaker in being often mis-reported without the reporters ever meaning to mis-report me. I remember the late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta[3], in 1896, telling me on the occasion of my very first public appearance on an Indian platform, that if I wished to be heard and if I wanted to be correctly reported, I should write out my speech. I always thanked him for this wise advice. I know that, if I had

[1] From the postmark
[2] As given in the source
[3] 1845-1915; prominent Indian Congress leader; *vide* Vol. I, p-384.

not followed his instructions for that particular meeting, it would have proved a fiasco. But I have had cause to recall the advice of the uncrowned king of the Presidency whenever I have been misreported. Somebody is said to have reported me as having described, at the Khilafat Conference at Amritsar, Lala Lajpat Rai as a coward. Whatever Lalaji may be, he is no coward. The context of my speech would have showed that I was defending Lalaji against the charge of being inimical to the Mussalmans. What I did say at the time was that Lalaji was timid and suspected the motives of Mussalmans but that he was sincerely desirous of Mussalman friendship. Let me not conceal my regard for Lalaji. I hold him to be brave, self-sacrificing, generous, truthful and godfearing. His patriotism is of the purest type. He has few equals in the quantity or the quality of service to the country. And if a man like him may be suspected of base motives, we would have to despair of Hindu-Muslim unity, as we would have to, if we suspected the Ali Brothers of base motives. We have all of us our limitations and prejudices. We, the Hindus and Mussalmans, must be taken as we are and those with whom Hindu-Muslim unity is a creed must seek to achieve it with the material we have. It is a bad carpenter who quarrels with his tools. Colonel Maddock told me that once he performed a very serious operation with an ordinary pocket knife, because he had no other with him at the time. The only sterilizer he had was boiling water. He dared and his patient lived. Let us dare to trust one another and we shall be safe. Trusting one another, however, can never mean trusting with the lip and mistrusting in the heart. That were cowardice indeed. And there can be no friendship between cowards, or cowards and brave men.

When Is Killing Justified?

Lala Shankerlal of Delhi tells me I am reported as having said that I advised Hindus to kill Mussalmans on certain occasions, e.g., when they were in the act of killing cows. I have not seen the report in question. But as the matter is of the utmost importance, I cannot be too precise or definite. I hold that it is no part of Hinduism to defend the cow against the whole world or against Mussalmans. If the Hindu attempted any such thing, he would be guilty of forcible conversion. His duty ends with his tender care of the cow. This duty, let me incidentally observe, he signally fails to discharge. The only way Hindus can convert the whole world to cow-protection is by giving an object-lesson in cow-protection and all it means. But everyone and there-

fore every Hindu is bound to defend with his life, the honour of his mother, sister, wife or daughter, in fact all those who are under his exclusive or special protection. My dharma teaches me for the sake of others to give my life without even attempting to kill. But my dharma also enables me to say that where choice lies between running away to the neglect of one's charge and killing the would-be ravisher, it is one's duty to kill and be killed, never to desert the post of duty. I have had the humiliation of meeting tall, well-built fellows coming to me and innocently telling me they had witnessed the rape of Hindu women by dissolute Mussulmans. In a society of brave men, evidence of completed rape should be almost impossible. Not a man should be alive to report such a crime. A simple *pujari* not knowing the meaning of non-violence told me with some glee that when a mob entered his temple to break his idols, he carefully hid himself away. Such a man I hold to be unfit to be a *pujari*. He should have died at his post. He would then have sanctified the idol with his blood. He would have been justified in killing the intruders, if he had not the courage to die at his post with a prayer on his lips that God might have pity on the assailants. But it was unmanly for him to have hidden himself to save his perishable skin. The truth is that cowardice itself is violence of a subtle and therefore dangerous type and far more difficult to eradicate than the habit of physical violence. A coward never risks his life. A man who would kill often risks it. A non-violent person's life is always at the disposal of him who would take it. For he knows that the soul within never dies. The encasing body is ever perishing. The more a man gives his life, the more he saves it. Thus non-violence requires more than the courage of the soldier of war. The *Gita* definition of a soldier is one who does not know what it is to run away from danger.

No-changers Again

Pathetic letters from No-changers continue to pour upon me. The writers frankly believe that I have sold the cause of non-co-operation and yet out of affection for me they will not rise in revolt against me. I recognize that those No-changers who write publicly against my having entered into the agreement with the Swarajists are doing so with the greatest restraint. I feel grateful for all the delicate consideration that is being shown to me. But if the consideration pleases me it also embarrasses me. Let me assure them that I shall in no way take it amiss if they resist me when they consider that I am in the wrong. Neither their

affection for me nor my past service should stand in the way of their resisting me. Let the resistance be as gentle, as courteous and as non-violent as they can make it. But let it be none the less firm on that account. Indeed with them non-co-operation is as much a principle of conduct as it is with me. I have stated repeatedly that if it is a sound principle, it must be capable of application in connection with one's dearest relatives or friends. I have stated more than once that I discovered the doctrine from a close observation of domestic life and in the course of regulating it as correctly as I knew how. The No-changers who feel convinced of my error would therefore serve me by non-co-operating with me. But if they have any doubt, I certainly claim the benefit of it. For my part I shall not strive with them any more. As an English friend would say, any further striving would amount to exerting undue influence. I have said all I had to in defence of the agreement. As I do not act hastily and without due deliberation, I am slow to retrace my steps. But the No-changers do not need my assurance that the moment I feel that I "sold the cause" I should beat a hasty retreat and make ample amends. But till then they would not want me to act against my convictions.

All Should Come

But whilst I do not wish to strive with the No-changers I want them to continue striving with me. I can recall several occasions when by constant striving with me friends were able to dislodge me from false positions. I would also gladly answer any doubts that they may still have. That being so, I would want all the No-changers who can to attend the Congress. Similarly do I want all the Pro-changers to attend. I want not merely their passive assent to the agreement but their active and enthusiastic co-operation in working the joint programme. I want their guidance and their criticism. Moreover, whilst I do not want to divide the house on matters relating to the agreement, there may be important issues on which a division may be inevitable. I would therefore like a full Congress. A delegate is not worthy of the appointment if he does not attend and represent his constituents at the annual session. But this year it is specially incumbent on every delegate to attend. A revolutionary change is sought to be introduced in the franchise. Regulations have to be drawn for its working, if it is accepted by the Congress. There are other important changes too which I propose to submit to the Subjects Committee. There will be also new conferences, e.g., National Home Rule and Non-Brahmin. It is thus necessary

from every point of view that delegates attend in full force and help the inauguration of momentous changes.

Young India, 18-12-1924

367. THE KOHAT TRAGEDY

The Government of India has rung down the curtain upon the Kohat tragedy. In the Viceregal reply to Pandit Malaviyaji the Government had prepared the public for some such resolution as is now before the public. The resolution is a demonstration of the Government's unchallengeable supremacy and disregard of public opinion, as it is also a demonstration of national impotence. To me the Kohat tragedy is not so much a result of Hindu-Muslim tension as of the utter worthlessness and incompetence of the local administration. Had they performed their elementary duty of protecting life and property, the wanton destruction begun and continued in broad daylight could have been easily prevented. But like Nero the authority watched and danced while Rome was burning. The authority cannot plead helplessness. It had ample resources at its disposal. It was at no time overwhelmed except by its own criminal indifference and callousness.

And now the Government of India has become partner in the crime by white-washing the local officials and even converting their neglect or worse into "coolness and courage".

One would have expected a full, open and independent inquiry. But nothing beyond a departmental inquiry at which the public was unrepresented took place. Its finding can command no public confidence. The refugees from Rai Bahadur Sardar Makhan Singh downward whom my Mussalman colleagues and I saw, whilst admitting that a pamphlet containing the highly insulting verses was published by Lala Jiwandas, said that ample amends were made for the publication by the Hindus and that the Hindu firing was in self-defence and after the destruction had been started by the Mussalmans. On behalf of the Kohat Mussalmans it was contended that sufficient amends were not made with regard to the pamphlet and that the Mussalman destruction and firing took place after the Hindus had opened fire and taken Mussalman life. Unfortunately the Mussalmans of Kohat not having come to Rawalpindi, we were unable to find out the real truth. It is therefore difficult to say that the Government of India's distribution of blame is erroneous.

But its finding cannot be accepted as an impartial or acceptable judgment. The Hindus of Kohat cannot be expected to accept and submit to the finding. Nor can such a finding, because it seems to favour the Mussalman contention, be any consolation to the Mussalmans of Kohat. For it would be wrong for the Mussalman public to applaud the Government of India's finding, because it for the moment seems to support the Mussalman contention. Any finding to be satisfactory must be joint and arrived at by Hindus and Mussalmans of proved impartiality. The Government of India resolution is therefore a challenge to both the communities. It tells the Hindu refugees to return to Kohat on pain of submission to humiliating conditions. It bribes the Mussalmans to impose humiliation on their Hindu brethren. I hope that Hindus will prefer a life of penury outside Kohat but without humiliation, to a life of plenty in Kohat with humiliation. I hope that Mussalmans will be manly enough to refuse the bait offered by the Government and decline to be party to imposing humiliation on their Hindu brethren who are in a hopeless minority in Kohat. Whosesoever the initial blunder and provocation, the fact stands that the Hindus were practically forced out of Kohat. It is up to the Mussalmans therefore to go to Rawalpindi and take the refugees back to Kohat with friendliness and with full guarantee for the safety of their lives and property. The Hindus outside Kohat should make it easy for the Mussalmans to make the approach. The Mussalmans outside should insist upon those in Kohat recognizing their primary obligation to the Hindu minority. On a proper and honourable solution of this delicate problem lies in a large measure the success of the efforts to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.

The sooner we, both co-operators and non-co-operators, cease to rely upon Government protection against one another, the better it will be for us and the quicker and more lasting will be the solution. Viewed in that light, the indifference of the Kohat officials is to be welcomed. History would have been differently and more honourably written if the Hindus had not sought the protection of the officials, had stuck to their homes and without offering any defence, or even in the act of forcibly defending themselves and their property and their dependants had been reduced to cinders. I would welcome a resolution by the Government that no one need look to them for protection in inter-communal quarrels. If we would leave[1] each party to defend itself against

[1] The source has "learn".

encroachment upon its liberty by the other, we would be well on the road to swaraj. It would be a fine training in self-defence and self-respect or which is the same thing, swaraj. There are two ways of defence. The best and the most effective is not to defend at all, but to remain at one's post risking every danger. The next best but equally honourable method is to strike bravely in self-defence and put one's life in the most dangerous positions. A few pitched battles between the two will soon teach them the uselessness of breaking one another's heads. It will teach them to fight thus is not to serve God but to serve Satan.

I conclude this article by repeating the promise I made to the refugees in Rawalpindi. If they will not return to Kohat till they receive cordial invitation from the Kohat Mussalmans, I shall be prepared as soon as the engagements already taken up are finished to go to Rawalpindi in company with M. Shaukat Ali and attempt to smooth the relations between the two or failing that to help them to find suitable occupation in life.

Young India, 18-12-1924

368. PATRIOTISM RUN MAD

If it is true that certain Mulshi Peta satyagrahis have wrecked a train taking labourers to Tatas works, injured the engine driver and slashed about labourers including women, it is a crime worthy of the highest condemnation. These offenders against law, order and decency are said to have declared themselves at war against Tatas and to have said that by waylaying the poor coolies they expect to stop the works in course of construction. This is terrorism in a cause supposed to be good. But all terrorism is bad whether put up in a good cause or bad. As a matter of fact every cause is good in the estimation of its champion. General Dyer (and he had thousands of Englishmen and women who honestly thought with him) enacted Jallianwala Bagh for a cause which he undoubtedly believed to be good. He thought that by that one act he had saved English lives and the Empire. That it was all a figment of his imagination cannot affect the valuation of the intensity of his conviction. Lords Lytton and Reading honestly believe that the Swaraj Party of Bengal is steeped in violence. But their terrorism cannot be justified on the score of the honesty of their motives. The cause that these mad Mulshi Peta satyagrahis hold to be just and good, the Tatas and their supporters genuinely believe to be wicked. They

are honestly of opinion that their scheme will benefit the surrounding villages, that they have paid full compensation to the parties dispossessed, that the latter have voluntarily vacated their holdings and that their scheme will be a boon to Bombay and that therefore those who seek to thwart the scheme are enemies of progress. They are as much entitled to this belief as I am to mine that the scheme will not benefit the people in the neighbourhood, that it will spoil the natural beauty of the place, that the poor villagers had no mind of their own and could therefore hardly be said to have voluntarily vacated their holdings, that no compensation is an adequate consideration for vacating a possession which sentiment has hallowed and that it is a debatable question if the scheme will be a boon to Bombay. But immediately I arrogate to myself the exclusive title to being in the right, I usurp the function of the Deity. And there being no absolute and universal standard of right, terrorism must be held to be wrong in every case. In other words, pure motives can never justify impure or violent action. I am therefore unable to congratulate the offenders even on their voluntary surrender to the authorities. This surrender is no mitigation of the crime. It may easily be simple bravado. The murderer of a lady the other day in Kirkee could not save himself from the gallows because he surrendered himself after the murder. The assault upon the innocent women who were earning an honest livelihood was an unpardonable wickedness. The self-styled friends of the Mulshi villagers had a perfect right, if they had wished, to go to the labourers and by argument wean them from labouring for the Tatas. But they had no right to take the law into their own hands. They had damaged a good cause by adopting the wrong method of terrorism and alienated what public sympathy they had. Terrorism set up by reformers may be just as bad as Government terrorism and it is often worse because it draws a certain amount of false sympathy. I heard a lady haranguing upon the self-sacrifice of revolutionaries and visibly moving the audience. A little reflection would however show that self-sacrifice must not be allowed to excuse a crime. Not even self-immolation can be allowed to support a bad or an immoral cause. He would be a weak father who would permit his child to play with fire because the child is hunger-striking for the permission. The youths who the other day very nearly murdered near Calcutta an innocent taxi-driver deserve no sympathy because they were robbing the driver for helping the cause of the country and because they were risking their lives in the attempt. Those who are betray-

ed into showing sympathy for such misguided youths are harming the country and doing no service to the youths.

Young India, 18-12-1924

369. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

December 18, 1924

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

Yes all your wires were received. I quite agree with you that you need rest—much more than I do. You are entirely absolved from any care about *Young India*. Write only when the spirit moves you. I ought not to have worried you about Egypt and Burma. My address has taken an extraordinary turn. I have dismissed many subjects with the briefest references. You will read it carefully at your leisure and criticize if you feel up to it. You must give the Europeans at Shantiniketan the hill climate in summer and food always cooked after the European style.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2618

370. LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE

Thursday [December 18, 1924][1]

BHAI MAMA,

I have your letter. Wednesday is the 31st. I intend leaving this place on that day and reaching Dohad in the morning on Friday by the Express. I shall go to Godhra on Saturday and return the same day or by the first available train on Sunday to Sabarmati. Thus I shall get 5th, 6th and 7th at the Ashram. After that I shall leave again on my wanderings. So give up

[1] It is presumed that Gandhiji wrote this letter before leaving Sabarmrti for Belgaum on Thursday, December 18, 1924. He was in Bombay on the 31st and visited Dohad and Godhra on the 2nd. The addressee was conducting an Ashram for *Antyajas* at Godhra.

expecting me on Monday. I shall inform you, if I have to make any change in this programme.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 3810

371. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Thursday, Magsar Vad 7 [December 18, 1924][1]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. It seems a *na* [not] got omitted in my letter to you. What I wanted to convey was, "Now it would not be proper if it is not held at Sonegarh." The reason for writing this was that the organizers may not just for the sake of convenience change a decision once taken. This is of course my personal opinion. It is for you and the Conference people to decide what to do.

I have written a letter to the Chairman of the Corporation. Some of your arguments are quite convincing.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3186. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

372. NON-CO-OPERATING STUDENTS

I have been hearing of an uproar among non-co-operating students because of some statements of mine. Some are even throwing sharply-worded paper arrows at me.

I am proud of the sacrifices made by students. I know the service they have rendered to the country. However, if students have done much, millionfold more remains to be done. There is no limit to sacrifice. Those who say, "We have made this sacrifice, it is more than enough," have become proud and their sacrifice has been in vain. Swaraj will come at the end of complete sacrifice. That is our test. Our sacrifice is incomplete, so long as we have not won swaraj.

[1] This is in reply to the addressee's letter of December 17, 1924. The omission of "not" referred to in the letter occurred in Gandhiji's letter of December 14.

Moreover, sacrifice which is painful is not worth the name. That alone is true sacrifice which exalts an individual, gives him peace and joy. Pleasures became painful to Lord Buddha and he renounced them. Renunciation pleased him, hence he persisted in it.

Withdrawal from Government schools is worth while only if the student feels, at the end, a sense of relief at his freedom. The parrot in a golden cage is safe from snakes and other creatures. It gets its food regularly. Despite this, if the master leaves the cage ajar, it would fly away to the branch of a tree and would swing there with joy. It knows that with this independence it would have to worry about its food and that it would be exposed to the danger of snakes and large birds, but this does not trouble it. That parrot's non-co-operation with the cage, with its master, will live for ever because it looks upon renunciation, non-co-operation, as a joy. It regards its master's fondness as selfish. The comforts at the latter's place were like discomforts to it. The parrot knew that freedom is beyond price. It was convinced that a bejewelled cage was still a cage; hence, no sooner was it opened than the parrot flew away.

Those students who left Government schools because they regarded them as delusive snares will not return there even if they appear to be made of gold and there are no independent schools for them. Only students who have made such a sacrifice have the right to stay out of Government schools. Non-co-operation was suspended in order that those who have not realized its value might have an opportunity to abandon it, and the stain or stigma attached to such abandonment might be removed. We do not benefit from a sacrifice which we find onerous and mistaken. The Congress will remove its demand for such a sacrifice and enable such students to freely attend Government schools.

However, those who find Government schools little better than prisons will continue to shun them even until death, as long as we have not won swaraj. Hence the problem for the students and other non-co-operators remains what it was. The only difference now is that those who felt bound by the Congress resolution are now free. Those, however, who felt bound by their own conscience, to their inner voice, will continue to be so bound.

Hence the distinction between Government education and national education is illusory because it is not one of principle. The principle involved that of flags, of authority. *Rotis* made in my house and in another's are of the same material; but since the latter has been cooked in someone else's home, taking it would

amount to theft and therefore it should be shunned. Even though the food in prisons is just like that at home, yet the former must not be touched. However, for a student who does not look upon Government schools as prisons, it is proper to return to them. Others have no right to criticize him. What is prison-house to one, may look like freedom to another.

The true movement consists in revolutionizing ideas. Action always follows ideas. To a thoughtful person action without ideas is burdensome; to the thoughtless it is neither beneficial nor harmful. The thoughtless imitate others and most of us are devoid of thought. It is for this very reason that devotees have praised the virtue of keeping good company.

We have now before us the era of only thoughtful non-co-operation. The external sanctions of the Congress, etc., are useful, like small doses of medicine, only for a short period. At the end of an experiment of three or four years we find that many scholars are sceptical about non-co-operation with schools. If we accept their verdict, the majority of them will be against leaving Government schools. In such an unfavourable atmosphere, only a few students can think independently and continue to practise non-co-operation.

It is the duty of national schools to help these few students. I have been made the Chancellor. My eligibility for that post is not at all based on my learning. My special qualifications as a non-co-operator can alone account for my eligibility to the chancellorship. Hence if I have stressed in the curriculum those aspects which further non-co-operation, I deserve not merely pardon, but praise.

However, this position of mine has been construed to show that I am an enemy of literacy, of learning. In fact, the opposite is true. I do not wish that national schools should do away with knowledge of letters and teach the theory and practice of carding and spinning alone. I wish that students should be given ample and proper instruction in reading and writing. I wish that they should be able to compete with the students of Government schools in this respect.

I shall not, however, be satisfied with this alone. In Government schools we are educated for jobs, for clerkships. The objective of national schools being swaraj, independence and self-reliance, along with literary instruction, students should be trained with a view to developing their moral and manual fibre. National schools should teach such things as would further the cause of swaraj. Book-learning should be regarded not as an end but rather as the means to developing strength of character and furthering the cause of swaraj. For developing strength of character, there must be

teachers who possess it. And, since the spinning-wheel is a powerful means of winning swaraj, I would not regard any national school which does not give it a place of honour as worth the name. The Congress, in its resolutions, has laid emphasis on the spinning-wheel. It is true that those who adopt such resolutions do not abide by them. Had the resolutions adopted by the Congress been fully implemented by its members alone, we would now be resting on our oars after winning swaraj or we would have been eagerly watching the bright buntings on its gates. However, the idleness and dishonesty on the part of the members cannot be an example before the non-co-operating students. Children would be ruined if they followed in the footsteps of elders. Tulsidas has sung, "the powerful can do no wrong." However, if we common people try to become powerful, we shall destroy ourselves. The national schools where the teaching of Hindi and Urdu are not compulsory, do not conduce to national interests. The interest of the country will be served by closing down those national schools which boycott untouchables. In a national school students of all communities—Hindu, Muslim, Parsi and Christian—should study together like brothers. In my opinion, all these are the features of a national school. I have no doubt that much of the advocacy for national schools is thoughtless. A change in text books, a distinctive method of teaching history and such other subjects, etc., are matters of little importance. Large sums of money need not be spent nor new institutions be founded for this. Leaving Government schools for want of these changes hardly deserves credit, is hardly possible. I have already examined the reasons for leaving Government schools. I have also dwelt on the distinction that ought to exist between Government schools and national ones. Therein lies the test for the organizers, teachers and students. That distinction is the conspicuous feature of non-co-operation. There may be much else in non-co-operation, but without this distinctive feature it cannot be called non-co-operation.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 21-12-1924

373. SPEECH TO NO-CHANGERS, BELGAUM

December 21, 1924

On Sunday again, there was a conference at which further discussions took place between Gandhiji and the No-changers. . . . His speech was a very touching and feeling one, and he seemed to have put his whole soul into it. . . . He said he continued to be as firm a No-changer now as he ever was and that the Councils were not for him. As an alternative to the Councils, he could not think of a more potent programme than that of charkha, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability being added to it. He could imagine a number of things which would be very useful to the country, but they were not indispensable for obtaining swaraj and he, therefore, stated that the charkha propaganda was the one thing that every man, high or low, in the city or village, could carry on singly or with others. It, therefore, formed the coping-stone of his programme for the year. He added that vast amount of charkha work was necessary to effect a complete boycott of foreign cloth within the year and it was absolutely necessary for Congress to adopt the spinning franchise. It was also necessary, he said, that all those who accepted the spinning franchise should work out the programme throughout the year in dead earnest and it would break his heart if those who accepted the franchise and voted for it would not carry it throughout the year. He concluded by expressing his hope and confidence that if those who voted for the franchise played their part in a full measure, this nation would not be long in responding to it.

Mahatmaji casually referred to the new plan of giving battle to Government that he had previously referred to in a speech in Punjab. He said it is stated that a complete or substantial boycott of foreign cloth was a condition precedent to the precise formulation of that method or plan. He exhorted the No-changers to concentrate all their energies during the following year on the charkha. He was staking everything on the spinning franchise and if he found himself not properly supported by his followers then it would mean breaking of his heart. His new plan would be different from that of Bardoli, although his faith in that was yet green. He was not going to unfold it to them fully, but if the necessary boycott was effected at the year's end his programme could put it into effect irrespective of what was happening in the country. But the principal condition precedent to it was boycott of foreign cloth. He was sure if they put forth necessary effort they would be able to boycott cloth of foreign make completely and if that could be done then the time would be for civil disobedience.

At the end Gandhiji asked that lists should be prepared from among those present of those who would agree to give the required 24,000 yards of

yarn at the year's end without fail and who would be ready to die for the country, if necessary.

The Bombay Chronicle, 22-12-1924

374. SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS, BELGAUM[1]

December 21, 1924

Mr. Gandhi, in his joint reply, said that he did not deserve the words of praise heaped upon him, for he had done nothing to their city or district. He repeated the suggestions he made on similar occasions recently at Bombay, Calcutta and Ahmedabad, and asked them to read and understand them. In the present political condition of India, the municipalities of India should take part in the national movement, but not at the sacrifice of their primary duties, cleanliness and sanitation. He was not an admirer of Western civilization, but in matters of sanitation, India had to learn a good deal from the West. India was essentially an agricultural country, and it ought to have been impossible for plague and other epidemics to spread in our cities, which were small compared to cities in Western countries. He felt pained whenever he heard people saying that these epidemics were divine dispensations. He was himself a believer in God, but human efforts had considerable scope for alleviating human miseries. When we ourselves break God's or Nature's laws, it is absurd to attribute these epidemics to God. He was glad to note that the relations between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, and Hindus and Mussalmans, were cordial, and while advising the audience to continue those relations, asked them to extend their love to the untouchables.

New India, 22-12-1924

[1] The addresses were presented by the Municipality and the District Board.

375. ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN

[*December 22, 1924*][1]

On the eve of the coming session of the Congress many thoughts come to me. It is the early morn of my day of silence, just four days before the meeting of the Congress. The eternal duel between Ormuzd and Ahriman—God and Satan — is raging in my breast, which is one among their billion battlefields. I have had two very precious days with the No-changers. Sarojini Devi says "No-changer" is a bad word. I have agreed and thrown the burden on her poetic shoulders of giving the public a sweeter word. One voice in me tells me, "All will be well if you will be 'careful for nothing' but merely do your duty as you find it." Another says, "You are a fool. You must not believe the Swarajists, nor must you trust the No-changers. The Swarajists do not mean what they say. The No-changers will leave you in the lurch at the critical moment. Between the two your spinning-wheel will be smashed to atoms. You will therefore do well to listen to me and retire." I am going to obey the first voice. What though the Swarajists are found to deceive me and the No-changers to desert me? They will lose, not I. But if I listen to the word of Mr. Worldly-wise, I am lost already. I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following. I must therefore believe the Swarajists, as I would myself be believed by them. I dare not impute weakness to the No-changers, because I would not like them to think that I was weak. I must therefore believe in the honour of the Swarajists and the strength of the No-changers. It is true that I have often been let down. Many have deceived me and many have been found wanting. But I do not repent of my association with them. For I knew how to non-co-operate, as I knew how to co-operate. The most practical, the most dignified way of going on in the world is to take people at their word, when you have no positive reason to the contrary.

My difficulty therefore is not whom to trust or not to trust. My difficulty lies in the fact that there are hardly half a dozen No-changers who are entirely or on the whole satisfied with the agreement. They have sincere doubts. I sympathize with them and yet I feel that I am doing the right thing in holding to the agree-

[1] From the reference to "my day of silence", i.e., Monday, December 22

ment. They would leave me if they could, but they cannot. The tie seems to be indissoluble. They want to trust my judgment in spite of themselves. This is a truly embarrassing position. It increases my responsibility a hundredfold. I assure them that I will not consciously betray their trust. I shall do nothing that will damage the country's cause or honour. But the greatest consolation I can give them is by pointing out that all would be well, if they will be true to themselves. Every one of them will have done his or her primary duty, if he or she practises Hindu-Muslim unity, and if he or she devotes all his or her spare time to carding and spinning and mastering t hescience of khaddar, and himself or herself wears it, and, if a Hindu, loves his or her untouchable brother as himself or herself. This much every one of us can do without any assistance. Practice is the best speech and the best propaganda. And this everyone can do without let or hindrance from anybody else. Not to worry about others is Ormuzd's way. Ahriman leads us into the trap by taking us away from ourselves. God is not in Kaaba or in Kashi. He is within everyone of us. Therefore swaraj too is to be found by searching inward, not by vainly expecting others, even our fellow-workers, to secure it for us.

Young India, 26-12-1924

376. SPEECH AT SUBJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING, BELGAUM[1]

December 23, 1924

Mr. Gandhi then addressed the meeting. He explained his attitude, that he had no desire to divide the House on any matter of vital difference between the Swarajists and non-Swarajists, although, in some matters, division might be inevitable. He referred to the pact he entered into in Calcutta with the Swarajist leaders, Messrs Das and Nehru, and after pointing out that the late All-India Congress Committee had accepted it, asked that it be endorsed now. He had watched what followed between the last meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and now. Mr. Vithalbhai Patel had been keeping him informed of the feeling in the country in connection with this agreement. The vital part of this agreement was the new franchise. Mr. Patel told Mr. Gandhi last night as well as today that he (Mr. Gandhi) was taking a fatal step by asking for a spinning franchise, and that 90 per cent of the Congressmen were against the proposed change in the franchise. Mr. Patel further told Mr. Gandhi that, so far as he knew, there was hardly any Swarajist who favoured a

[1] Presided over by Gandhiji

change in the franchise, and that there was a large body of opinion even among the No-changers against the change. Mr. Gandhi combated that view although he had seen the resolution passed by the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, and by the Sind and the C.P. Maharashtra Committees, and also by a conference in Bihar. If the meeting considered it necessary to reject the agreement, they must do so, leaving him out of consideration.

I must warn you against accepting this change simply to please me. You must vote according to your conscience, which is more valuable than any single man's opinion, whatever may be his services, and however highly placed he may be in your estimation.

Mr. Das wrote to me that so far as the Swarajists were concerned, I could be at ease on this question of the pact, and that Mr. Vithalbhai Patel represented only himself. Mr. Das also wrote that the majority decision of the Swaraj Party was binding on every single member of the Swaraj organization, and would be loyally carried out.

Of course, he felt considerable relief when he heard this, but he would ask Mr. Das to relieve every Swarajist from any such obligation because, if this agreement did not commend itself to anyone, he must reject it summarily. This agreement should not be accepted simply that it might appear on paper. It meant sustained and ceaseless work, and submission to very rigorous discipline. They would each be expected to send two thousand yards per month regularly by their own spinning. The quota could be made by allowing others to spin only in cases of inability or real unwillingness, but even then, they were expected to supervise the spinning. The House must clearly understand the implications of the pact before giving consent to it.

At the meeting he had with the No-changers on this pact, the preliminary objection was raised whether the Swaraj Party could have a different franchise from the Congress franchise, but Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar had told him that it was proposed by the Swaraj Party to alter the constitution, and to bring it in line with that of the Congress. The No-changers, on the assumption that the Swaraj Party franchise and creed would be the same as those of the Congress, accepted the pact by an overwhelming majority.

New India, 24-12-1924

377. STATEMENT ON A.I.C.C. EXTRAVAGANCE, BELGAUM

December 25, 1924

Gandhiji then made a statement that there was too much lavishness in the expenditure of the All-India Committee. Too much money was spent in decorations and accommodation and the present delegate's fee of Rs. 10 was too much. He complained that his own hut was also too costly, and ought not to have been constructed like that. Too much money was also spent on printing and he wanted to stop all that. If he had been a member of the Committee, he would cut down the expenditure for accommodation, etc. He accordingly suggested that the delegate's fee should be Re. 1 instead of Rs. 10 as at present as he had received complaints that nearly Rs. 100 had to be spent by delegates for their fare, etc. The Subjects Committee agreed to reduce the fee to Re. 1.

It was next decided to fix the venue of the next Congress in that province which on the population basis showed the best results in connection with khaddar and boycott of foreign cloth.

The Bombay Chronicle, 26-12-1924

378. SPEECH AT SUBJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING, BELGAUM[1]

December 25, 1924

The following is the full text of the moving speech made by Mahatma Gandhi at the meeting of the Subjects Committee of the All-India Congress on Thursday last:

Tomorrow we meet sharp at 3 o'clock. A few minutes will be spent in musical recitations. The chairman of the Reception Committee will not take more than 15 minutes to deliver his speech. I do not propose to read my address. My speech will be distributed to you this evening. You will kindly study that address, for the address will be taken as read. I shall make a few simple introductory remarks not covering more than 30 minutes. I shall begin in Hindustani and then speak in English. On the whole it would not exceed 30 minutes.

[1] Mahadev Desai's report of this speech, partly indirect, appeared in *Young India*, 1-1-1925, under the caption, "Implication of Non-violence".

Tomorrow the first resolution that will be moved after the formal reading of the addresses will be that relating to the Calcutta agreement. It will be opposed by Maulana Hasrat Mohani. In this connection let me make a few observations. You are the representatives in a sense. We have got all the delegates. I would respectfully warn you against accepting the resolution if you want to put the whole burden upon my shoulders. I should say my shoulders are incapable of carrying that burden. I want to carry that burden only with your assistance. Unless every one of you is prepared to give your assistance whole-heartedly in spirit and to the letter, our purpose cannot be achieved. Our purpose is to bring about boycott of foreign cloth. That can be done only by the assistance of the poorest of the poor men, women and children. It is an honest attempt and a proper attempt in my humble opinion to make on behalf of the nation. If we can achieve that boycott, which is the only thing we are capable of doing today, it is a way of demonstrating to ourselves and to the world that we can do thousand and other things also side by side, but only after the boycott is achieved.

You will remember there was an amendment today which hurt me. It was moved by Mr. Bhopatkar stating that when adults do not undertake to spin and wear khaddar on all occasions it is unfair on our part to expect children to do so. This really hurt me for the simple reason that he put a construction on the franchise which it is incapable of bearing. I say the franchise is the minimum that we imposed. Naturally it must be so, because it then becomes punishable in the sense that if that minimum compliance is not shown you will deprive people of the right of voting. The right of vote is a sacred thing. The minimum requirement had to be put. That was to put on khaddar on all political and ceremonial occasions, but surely that does not mean that you will discard khaddar cloth the moment you finish the Congress business in Belgaum. If that is the meaning, you cannot effectively boycott foreign cloth. I want you to read and understand the spirit of the agreement. This is the minimum expectation from the Congress members. How much more then can we expect from the nation? Not only should we adults but all children must wear khaddar on all occasions. I mean to say that khaddar must be our daily wear. Unless it becomes so there can be no boycott.

I have been told that the provision exempting unwilling persons from personally spinning is only a loop-hole not to spin, but that is not the sense in which I read the agreement. If that is the sense in which you take it, I would like to throw out the

resolution tomorrow, although it will pain me to find that the boycott of foreign cloth is an impossibility. The clause about unwillingness is only meant for those who are constitutionally disabled or unwilling. Children surely did not come under that clause. You must be prepared to work the agreement so that you make the boycott of foreign cloth a possibility. We shall see swinging success within a year if we only honestly work it. If delegates spread themselves in villages and expound to the people the message of the charkha, it will occupy the energy of all the best of us. Unless you have faith in it, there is no use passing this resolution. Therefore when you meet tomorrow, I want you to give your vote after intelligently and deliberately knowing the consequences of so doing. Unless you want sincerely to work this programme, it will not succeed. Every one of the delegates when he goes to his province should keep himself in touch with villagers of his province and tell them what they ought to do. Let the delegates vote tomorrow intelligently and deliberately and counting the consequences.

Before you disperse I would put you on your guard and remind you of the sacred trust imposed on you. It is my intention to finish the work on the 27th. We must have one clear day to dispose of business, to settle the procedure and the details of the work of the All-India Congress Committee and to appoint a Working Committee and so on.

Here Mr. N. C. Kelkar addressing Mahatma Gandhi said: "I have heard your appeal. It has so far been addressed to Swarajists. But I want you to appeal to No-changers also with regard to the other part of the pact, i.e., recognition of Council work on behalf of Congress and assisting Council-walas in all possible ways. I want to hear your appeal to them."

I entirely agree with Mr. Kelkar. In fact, I have already explained my views in the pages of *Young India*. Before we prepare ourselves for tomorrow's sacred task I should remind every No-changer of his duty. My appeal was not confined merely to Swarajists. I have always been told that there are among No-changers people who do not believe in the spinning franchise. My appeal to No-changers therefore is that they should take this agreement in the spirit in which it is intended by me and as it should be intended by them. I propose to assist Swarajists to the best of my ability and so far as one human being can do to assist them in their cause and I shall not damage it. I say deliberately their cause, because for some reason or other I do not see eye to eye with them in their methods. It is true

that their cause is not only theirs or of Congress merely, but of the nation. I am no judge. They have a perfect right to say, 'What is this charkha?' I have an equally perfect right to say, 'What is this Council?' which, they say, is 'one of the important items in our fight against the bureaucracy' I do not see eye to eye with them in their methods but although I doubt their methods I can help Swarajists and give them definite recognition for their policy in the Congress.

A MEMBER: In the name of the Congress?

Yes, in the name of the Congress. I cast about around me to see how I was to help them. I hit on the agreement. I saw I conferred no favour. It is their right, but I took some time before I saw it was their right and, seeing it is so, I must not even mentally hinder their programme. On the contrary, I must make an attempt to have a conviction in me that what they are doing is right. I shall also ask you to do likewise.

That is why I am going out of my way to put myself in touch with every Swarajist. I tried to keep my mind absolutely open to their arguments and their suggestions. That is the way in which I can give help to the Swarajists. If it is to mean that I will help them by speaking on platforms, on Government measures or conducting meetings and so on, I am sorry, I will not be able to do that because my heart is not in it. That is not the way in which I understood and entered into the agreement. These are my limitations. It is not that I am unwilling to do this but I want to be convinced. Immediately I am convinced, nothing on this earth will prevent me from declaring myself a full-fledged Swarajist. Then they will have a right to expect from me all the twenty-four hours, the whole of my waking hours. Today I cannot give them that whole-hearted support, but within my sphere I shall certainly give you encouraging and whole-hearted support. For example, when the Government want to damage you and your reputation you will find me side by side with you and eager to assist you. I want to suffer with you and, even if you reject my offer, I will say unto you, 'For Heaven's sake let me help you.' But when it comes to asking me to say in private that this policy is good, I must frankly confess that is not the meaning I should put upon it. But I want you to say, if people ask you in private, that even though they do not believe in this charkha, yet they must spin. You say you do not disbelieve in the charkha. If you disbelieve, you will be false to your trust if you do not reject the agreement.

MR. KELKAR: But the work will be in proportion to the negative mental condition. You should be prepared to make some allowance for those Swarajists who put some mental reservation as many of them have already done so.

If that mental reservation goes to the length of believing that the charkha will do no good, then you are bound to reject it.

The co-operation in respect of the charkha that I expect from Swarajists is not of the same kind and measure as might be expected from me regarding Council work and that is clearly put forth in the agreement. I do not expect impossible things from you. What I do expect from you is just that amount of support and strictest honesty in giving it to the measure of your ability and conviction and not a whit more. That is the spirit in which I want every member to approach this agreement and, if it is not that spirit, I prophesy that our movement will be a failure. But I will not have failed even then. Of course, I would be considered an egregious fellow, an egotist as some Europeans say and some Indians too say, that I alone claim to understand human nature and no one else does. I believe I am right. Others may be equally in the right, but if I do not believe in my rightness and in my methods I would be unfit to be at the helm of affairs. What I want to correct is that bad mentality, that mental reservation, to which Mr. Kelkar refers. There should be no mental reservation. Let no one think that the Swarajists are the enemies of India. Nor do I believe that the poor anarchist is the enemy of India. He acts according to his own lights. How can I judge? I can judge only his action, but there is no analogy here.

I say to No-changers, 'If you do not believe in the charkha, you will find ultimately there is no other alternative method for you, unless you resort to violent methods. If you find that the charkha does not satisfy your patriotic soul, you must go to Councils where at least you make a splash and get the discharge of some prisoners.' If today the Swarajists will sacrifice their dearest principles and say they want the discharge of prisoners in the Andamans, they can get it, but they are true to all the trust they have imposed on themselves and they will make no such bad bargain for the country. They have not gone to the Council in order to get the discharge of Andaman prisoners or even of a miserable ailing man in Yeravda Jail. I have often said and I repeat that, if you do not believe in the charkha, the only alternative is that you must go to the Councils. That is the secret of so many persons going to the Councils to do something. After all, those who have gone to the Councils represent the best intellects in the country. They are seasoned soldiers. Where, for

the example, will you find a man who has sacrificed his life like Pandit Malaviya? I knew him since 1901 when I saw him addressing the Congress under the presidentship of Sir Dinshaw Wacha. There is a great deal of work to his credit and he remains in the Council. He still swears by the Council and he is no fool. Every time I see him my head bows to him. Who is Mr. C. R. Das and who is Pandit Motilal Nehru? Why should they dress in this fashion today? Pandit Motilal Nehru once lived like a prince. He came to Lahore in a motor-car followed by an army of servants. Very few princes lived like him and his once beautiful garden with roses and flowers is today growing weeds. Is he a traitor? My head always bows before these and whenever I see them I feel that there is something incomplete in me because I cannot see eye to eye with them and understand their standpoint. Who again, is Mr. Kelkar? He is the representative of one of the greatest of Indians who will go down to posterity and who will be worshipped as a God in this country which believes in millions of Gods under that one universal God. My appeal to you therefore, is: "Cleanse your hearts, have charity, make your hearts as broad as the ocean. That is the teaching of the Koran and of the *Gita*. Do not judge others lest you be judged. There is that Supreme Judge who can hang you, but He lets you live. There are so many enemies around you and within you, but He protects and looks upon you with a kindly eye."

Cannot you do so? Why should we say that their politics are corrupt, that they are fraudulent men, that they are dishonest, or that they have not foresighted statesmanship? Heaven protect us from any such calumny of human nature. So long as the world lasts, so long will there be so many differences of opinion, and the greatest achievement of the No-changers will be when they make their so-called opponents their truest friends and convert them to the creed of the charkha. Believe me, if the No-changers leave the imputation and do their duty and swear by the charkha and die for it, they will make them converts to the creed. If people do not take to the charkha it is because they do not see its utility. It is for you to show it. I sing near the charkha because I have got that unquenchable faith in me that it will bring salvation to the country. The teaching of the Hindu religion is nothing if not faith. If you believe in the charkha supposing that it is not good for others, it is everything for us. The image of stone in Kashi Visvanath temple may be a stone to Maulana Hasrat Mohani.

MAULANA: I never feel like that.

When I go there my heart must melt. It is faith that counts. When I see a cow, it is not an animal to eat, it is a poem of pity for me and I worship it and I shall defend its worship against the whole world. God there is only one, but He enables me to see Him in a stone, in an Englishman and even in a traitor. I shall not hate even a traitor. My religion takes me to that length. I say to every No-changer, "If you are worthy of your creed and are non-violent, you will shake hands with Swarajist and say, 'Forgive us for what we have done.'" You have no right to harbour ill will against anyone or say a single word against him. Just follow that noble prescription, a nobler prescription I cannot give you. May God help you and enable you to follow that prescription and all will be well at the end of the year.

The Bombay Chronicle, 30-12-1924

379. *TELEGRAM TO ANANTRAM*

[Before *December 26, 1924*][1]

DIWAN ANANTRAM
REFUGEES CAMP
RAWALPINDI

PLEASE SEND LIST FAMILIES REFUGEES WITH THEIR NEEDS. HOPE SOMEONE COMING BELGAUM.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 10517

[1] From the reference to Belgaum where the Congress session was held on December 26 and 27

380. NOTES

Business-like

Mr. S. G. Pujari of Bijapur sends the following business-like note on the remark in *Young India* that opinion was divided as to the want of durability of khaddar:

> I am an actual worker in khaddar. One hundred and twenty charkhas with thirteen looms are working under me. I turn out three hundred yards of khaddar every week. My experience dates from 21st August 1921. My method is to purchase cotton locally, issue slivers to spinners, stock the yarn of each spinner separate, and to use the yarn of one hand for the whole of the warp of one whole piece. The same process is repeated as regards woof, the latter being of lower count than the former. That makes the cloth uniform and strong and gives longer durability. I can quote dozens of instances of my customers whose dhotis, shirts and coats generally last for one year.
>
> The durability of khaddar is chiefly affected by using yarn bought in markets, because
>
> 1. it is not always of good cotton,
> 2. mostly under-twisted,
> 3. inadvertently sorted,
> 4. loosely woven.
>
> If producers of khaddar would but care to avoid these things, there will be less room for complaints as regards durability.

I publish the note for the guidance of all who are interested in khaddar manufacture.

Two Addresses

The Belgaum District Board and the Belgaum Municipality did me the honour of presenting me addresses which recounted my virtues. I felt that any recital of my virtues as an All-India worker was beside the point. A municipal address may be fittingly given only to a person for municipal virtues. But in the special circumstances in which we are placed, the municipalities which are struggling to be free give expression to their freedom by somewhat identifying themselves with public workers, whether they possess municipal merit or not. It is only from that point of view that the presentation of the municipal addresses to public workers may be justified. But the presentation of these addresses gave me an opportunity of paying a tribute to a Western effort

in the midst of my opposition to Western civilization in general.[1] The one thing which we can and must learn from the West is the science of municipal sanitation. By instinct and habit we are used to village life, where the need for corporate sanitation is not much felt. But as the Western civilization is materialistic and therefore tends towards the development of the cities to the neglect of villages, the peoples of the West have evolved a science of corporate sanitation and hygiene from which we have much to learn. Our narrow and tortuous lanes, our congested ill-ventilated houses, our criminal neglect of sources of drinking water require remedying. Every municipality can render the greatest service by insisting on people observing the laws of sanitation. It is a superstition to consider that vast sums of money are required for effecting sanitary reform. We must modify Western methods of sanitation to suit our requirements. And as my patriotism is inclusive and admits of no enmity or ill will, I do not hesitate, in spite of my horror of Western materialism, to take from the West what is beneficial for me. And as I know Englishmen to be resourceful, I gratefully seek their assistance in such matters. For instance, I owe to Poore my knowledge of the cheapest and the most effective method of disposal of human excreta. He has shown how by our ignorance or prejudice we waste this precious manure. Excreta are not dirt in their proper place and when they are properly handled. Dirt, as the English say, is "matter misplaced".

Indians in South Africa

The serpentine coil round the Indian settlers of South Africa is daily tightening. Now in Natal they are deprived even of the municipal franchise. This was said to have been protected. When the attempt was made to take away from them the political franchise, the Natal Government declared that they had no design upon the enjoyment by Indians of the municipal franchise. But no promise made to a weak party is sacred in the estimation of modern Governments. Each party must be able to defend its rights by its own inherent strength. The Government of India's vaunted trusteeship fails at the crucial moment. I know that the settlers look to us for help and protection. But they should know that they can have little help from India for the present. She herself is engaged in a life-and-death struggle. Years ago the late Sir Pherozeshah prophesied that India would be of little help

1 *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Welcome Address, Belgaum", 21-12-1924.

to the Indians overseas, so long as she had not acquired the ability to assert herself. The late Pestonji Padsha was even disgusted with me for going to South Africa. He thought every Indian worker going out of India was so much economic waste. I think his clear brain partially failed Mr. Padsha. My residence in South Africa was not an economic waste of power. But is there not much truth underlying Mr. Padsha's burning desire first to secure India's freedom? Till we have acquired it, we must send our countrymen across the seas such comfort as newspaper and other sympathy can give them.

Typical

I give below Babu Hardayal Nag's letter:

Dear Mahatmaji,

I owe you an explanation for not attending the Belgaum Congress, particularly the informal conference to be held at Belgaum on the 20th. My "horror for conferences" prevents me from attending the conference. I feel that "they have in their present form almost outgrown their usefulness". I cannot persuade myself to leave my engagement in the work of khaddar production, humble though it is, for merely a "heart to heart" talk at Belgaum. I am not attending the Belgaum Congress for the following reasons:

1. I am not in a mood at present to vote against you and as a matter of fact you attach no importance to any voting at Belgaum.

2. I understand that the Calcutta pact is irrevocable.

3. I cannot persuade myself to be a party to the suspension of non-co-operation. I do not believe that non-co-operation requires suspension, except for killing the orthodox non-co-operators.

4. I hold some strong views about Hindu-Muslim unity which are not in line with the views of many of the Congress leaders.

5. You are strong enough to associate with wickedness for the purpose of conquering it with love, but other non-co-operators by such association are liable to extinction. I believe I am saving myself from extinction as a non-co-operator by not attending the Belgaum Congress.

6. I have very strong feelings in favour of majority rule and there are many who share those feelings. I understand no such rule will be observed in conducting business at Belgaum.

7. The last but not the least ground is that I think my "money and time" can be better utilized in helping "khaddar production" in my own locality than by attending the conference and Congress at Belgaum. The Congress organizations in Bengal being in the hands of the Swarajists are scarcely rendering any help to the spinning and weaving propaganda. I understand most of the contributors, if not all, of quotas of yarn to the

All-India Khaddar Board from Bengal according to the Ahmedabad resolution are non-co-operators and their friends and sympathizers.

In conclusion, I feel bound to request you to visit Bengal in January next and have a heart to heart talk with the orthodox non-co-operators in a certain central place and then visit as many localities as you possibly can. That will materially help their constructive work, specially national education which is now in a moribund condition. I earnestly and fervently hope you will pardon me even if the above grounds do not afford sufficient excuse for not going to Belgaum.

Babu Hardayal Nag is a veteran non-co-operator. His attitude is typical of that of many No-changers. Holding the views he does, I cannot but endorse his decision to abstain from attendance at Belgaum. Indeed I appreciate this resentment against even suspension of non-co-operation. I wish there was more of it. I am not advising national suspension for the love of it. Circumstances have compelled me to do so. It is for individuals to make it national again if necessary by demonstrating its efficacy in their own persons and remaining non-violent at the same time. I would ask Babu Hardayal and those who think like him to be most careful about accusing opponents of wickedness. "Judge not lest ye be judged" is a golden rule. Those whom we regard as wicked as a rule return the compliment and in their turn accuse us of what we charge them with. But here again I quite grant the proposition that if one regards another as irrevocably wicked, one is bound ordinarily to non-co-operate with him, for unfortunately many things are regulated purely by one's mental condition. If I mistake a rope for a snake, I am likely to turn pale with fright, much to the amusement of the bystander who knows that it is but a rope. Mind is its own place, it "can make a hell of heaven."[1] So far as the complaint against Congress organizations in Bengal is concerned, whatever may be the position today, if hand-spinning becomes part of the franchise, no Congress organization can exist that does not encourage and organize hand-spinning.

So far as my visit to Bengal is concerned, I would come to tour through the different districts at the earliest opportunity. But it is difficult to fix the time. Kohat refugees are a first charge on my time after 23rd January. And every day till 23rd January is already mortgaged. It is risky to say where fate would lead me after the Punjab work is over.

Young India, 26-12-1924

[1] Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II

381. OPENING SPEECH AT BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 26, 1924

The President, Mahatma Gandhi, walked down from the dais to the rostrum in loin-cloth and with khaddar in his hand amidst enthusiastic cheers. He hung up his bag on the rostrum, sat on a sufficiently high stool and kept his watch open in front of him. He was then presented by the chairman of the Reception Committee a copy of the *Karnatak, a Handbook* enclosed in a sandal-wood box, saying: "For your information, Sir". The President received the present amidst cheers . . . He then proceeded to address in Hindi. For ten minutes he made a speech in Hindi, which is as follows:

MR. GANGADHARRAO[1], BROTHERS AND SISTERS,[2]

I shall not abuse the great honour you have accorded me by giving you a long lecture. What I want to say from this rostrum is known to all of you. My speech, or address or lecture, whatever you call it, has been translated and printed in Hindi, Canarese, Marathi and English.[3] I had requested Mr. Gangadharrao to see that you all had copies of it by yesterday evening. I hope it has reached all of you and you have read it thoroughly.

I wish merely to say this: that we are today faced with a situation where what we had set out to accomplish in 1920-21 we were not able to accomplish, while among us disunity and ill feeling have raised their head. Hindus and Muslims consider each other enemies and indulge in physical violence. It is hardly necessary to say that this is not the way to secure swaraj. We, Hindus, look down on the untouchables and consider it sinful to touch them. We thus think that they are impure. But in this we commit a sin before God, a sin of the greatest magnitude. It is true that for three or four years now we have accepted it that everyone, big and small, should ply the charkha; and we have been saying in the Congress, in the All-India Congress Committee, that it is our intention to secure swaraj through the charkha. When I went to Poona in the course of the present campaign I said at a meeting[4] that the Lokamanya had given us the first line of a

[1] Chairman of the Reception Committee

[2] From the report in Hindi

[3] *Vide* "Presidential Address at Belgaum Congress", 26-12-1924.

[4] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Poona", 4-9-1924.

sloka[1], "Swaraj is our birthright", and that it is my mission in life to complete the *sloka*. This is my belief. I repeat the statement here. If we desire swaraj, then the way to it is through the charkha, yarn, and khaddar. I regret to say that while you know it you do not act on it. I neither know nor can think of anything else. I therefore tell you, brothers and sisters, that it is futile for me to appear before you and make speeches, it does not lead anywhere, it is wasting your time and my own time which I consider valuable for I deem myself a servant of God. I know that we cannot get swaraj in this way. Begum Mahomed Ali said to me once that whenever she goes to attend a Congress session, for about a week she has the feeling that we have already got swaraj. It means that we put on an act of swaraj. It is like seeing someone play the part of Harishchandra who is of course not Harishchandra. We do not know whether the player who acts Harishchandra is truthful or not. This celebration of swaraj has similarly become a play-acting. That is why I say to you, brothers, Deshbandhu Das is moving a resolution; accept the resolution only if you agree with it. If you do not agree with it you should reject it. There is no reference in it to Hindu-Muslim unity, nor is it concerned with untouchability. All that it says is that we wish to ply the charkha. I ask you all who have come here as delegates—untouchables, Christians or others—if you really represent those that you claim to represent and if you uphold the pledge of Mahomed Ali and Das, to do whatever you want to do with God in your sight. If you feel that it is not right, that Gandhi is deceiving you, then by all means reject it, have nothing to do with it. But if you take a pledge, if you accept this resolution—for I consider accepting is taking a pledge—and then do not keep to it, I leave you to yourselves. If the country thinks Gandhi is mad, discard him. Think again. Do you feel India is fit for swaraj? What does the world have to say about one who violates a pledge? Well, he may read the Bible, or the *Granth Saheb*, or the Koran, in your eyes he will be a leper, a good-for-nothing, a false coin, a counterfeit rupee. If you take a false coin to a shop the Government will haul you up for it. This is what I wish to tell you. I do not mean to mislead you, I do not mean to play a game with you. I tell you what I think and feel. I am convinced that swaraj cannot come so long as the tens of millions of our brothers and sisters do not take to the charkha, do not spin, do not make khadi and wear it. So long

[1] Sanskrit verse form

as this does not come about, the utter poverty of India cannot be eradicated. There will be no swaraj so long as the tens of millions of the country's destitutes have not got their bread.

You can have swaraj only on this condition. I have made a compact with Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, and I have placed it before the whole country. I believe there is nothing wrong in what I want; I accept their right to what they want. I hold that we can gain nothing through the Councils; but there are big leaders who believe that something or other can be gained through the Councils and that if we do nothing else we can at least go into the Councils. It is true enough. I must say that if they see some advantage in going into the Councils they should do so. They too are leaders of the country. Who am I to say no to them? It is in the compact that those who so wish may go into the Councils. It does not mean that non-co-operators should also follow them. The Congress belongs equally to Pro-changers and No-changers. It is a false notion that it belongs exclusively to either. Therefore they will go [into the Councils] on behalf of the Congress.

I said it is a false notion. But it is dangerous to argue that the notion that I am right and others are wrong should also be done away with. So long as there are different minds in the world there will also be different opinions. But we wish to embrace all, to promote tolerance—it is part of ahimsa.

But, as I said, it is a small matter. The most important thing in the pledge is the charkha. If you do not believe in the science of charkha, if you do not have faith in khadi and if you believe further that the new franchise will weaken the Congress, you should give up the charkha.

Brothers, I have addressed to you these few words in my lame and broken Hindi. I am sorry to see that a number of our brethren from Karnatak and the South come and say: "Speak in English." It is a matter of pain. Ever since I came to India I have been saying that at least in the Congress, when we speak about swaraj, we should do so in Hindi. But to our misfortune our education has become so faulty and so much lethargy has crept in that we do not make as much effort towards this as is demanded. If even now I could be convinced that those of our brethren who have come from Tamilnad or Karnatak can understand my broken Hindi, I would go from here satisfied. But I know that is not the case. Yes, I am forgetting something. I am forgetting Deshbandhu Das. Bengal is also contributing towards this sin. I wish God had given me the power to learn the language in

which Rabindranath Tagore has created such fine literature and I could address my Bengali brethren in that language. But that was not to be.

Now I have only one request to make. Please understand it. All I had to say in Hindi I have said; you have understood the purport of the resolution. He[1] will come and say what he wants to. He will not read the text of the resolution. Please do not press him to. For the convenience of the delegates I had asked Jawaharlal and Gangadharrao to see that they all had copies of the resolution. So you will all have received it. (Voices of "No, no.") How many such are there? (A great many voices are raised.) Well, I have explained it to you. I have told you what it contains (Laughter.). You will all read it. It will be there in the newspapers. It is merely this. It expresses the desire of Swarajists Pro-changers—and No-changers to live in unity. Our views are different but our hearts beat together. If you are a No-changer you must have the same place in your heart for Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal and Kelkar and others as you have for me. If you are a Swarajist you must have the same respect for me as you have for any of them. This is what Hindu-Muslim unity is. The meaning of Hindu-Muslim unity is that if I am a *sanatani* I will have as much place in my heart for Maulanas Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali or any other Muslim as I have for Malaviyaji, even if the former treats us as enemy. Strange, you will think—Malaviyaji on one side and the Mussulman who treats us as enemy on the other. But if I have learnt anything from my reading of the *Gita*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Ramayana*, it is this.

So you will now read the resolution and hear what he has to say. Do not compel him to read out the resolution. . . .

Continuing his remarks in English, the President said:

FRIENDS,

I do not propose to keep you longer than ten minutes. I had given myself no more than half an hour and I have taken more time than I had intended to in Hindustani. As you have all received copies of my address in the several necessary languages for our purpose, I do not propose to read any part of that address. It will tax your patience, it will waste your time and my time, and so I am avoiding to read that address. We want to go through the work that lies before us as quickly as possible. Desh-

[1] C. R. Das

bandhu Das will presently place before you the central resolution. If you reject that resolution you should go your way and do what you think best for you and for the country and permit me to do that work which I consider best for me, namely, to spin. I urge you, every one of you, to ponder over what is going to be placed before you.

A revolutionary change is being proposed before the nation, a change, I think, as Lalaji has said, as revolutionary as the change embarked upon by the nation under his Presidency in 1920 at the Special Session at Calcutta. I even admit with him that the change that I have proposed and placed before the nation is possibly more revolutionary still. And, therefore, I make bold to say that it is calculated to bring you within measurable distance of swaraj if you will whole-heartedly accept that resolution and give effect to it; for the days when we could be satisfied with merely passing resolutions and then forgetting all about them are gone. This resolution is not addressed to the nation in a vague manner but to everybody who has a will to work. This resolution is specifically addressed to every man and every woman of understanding who graces this audience by his or her presence this afternoon. And, though Deshbandhu Das and Maulana Mahomed Ali will not ask you to pass this resolution, keeping God as witness, I ask you to do that. And when you begin to vote upon that resolution, please remember and understand, you will be passing that resolution with God as witness. It would mean that you are undertaking to do something for the nation, for the poorest of the country, for the attainment of swaraj; and if you have no conviction about it in you, then I would urge you to reject that resolution.

It should not matter to you that my personality is behind that resolution. I have said repeatedly that I am not an infallible being. I have admitted repeatedly that I am a fallible being. I have repeatedly admitted that I have sometimes in my life committed Himalayan blunders. I have made penance for them. An infallible being is a perfect person. He does not need to perform penance. He does not need to repent, because he is incapable of folly. He need not argue. I am just as good or as bad a mortal as any one of you. And therefore, I want you to dismiss my personality from the equation and find the true answer to the equation.

The resolution is a momentous one. I know there is a large body of opinion against it. There is one body of opinion which says, "It is not proper to pin our faith entirely on spinning."

Another body says that spinning is good but it is a long-drawn-out agony. And a third says, "Although khaddar and hand-spinning are good in themselves, they can have no place in national franchise." I hold views absolutely contrary to them. And my conviction is growing upon me day by day, so much so that if I had all time to myself I would be spinning away every hour and feel that every revolution of the charkha was bringing swaraj nearer and nearer to us. Multiply that revolution by 300 million and you imagine the momentum that is set free for the attainment of swaraj. But that momentum you will set free only if you have the conviction that fires me in its efficacy for the attainment of swaraj.

There are many things that I have said in my address. Srimati Sarojini Devi has asked me to touch upon one thing; and out of regard for her who has rendered such splendid service in South Africa I do so now. That is Hindu-Muslim unity. Maulana Shaukat Ali says, "I am tired of the whole business. Let us simply leave alone Hindu-Muslim riots wherever they happen." There is a good deal of wisdom in that big head; it is not all fat, I tell you (Laughter.). Repeatedly he has said, "These Mussalmans of mine have become idiots. They have become demented. Similarly your Hindus also have become idiotic. We are trying to decide their disputes and in trying to do so we are allowing swaraj to slip through our hands. So let us leave them alone." But how can I do so? Hindu-Muslim unity, like the charkha, is a madness with me; it is a passion with me. I cannot possibly leave it and forget all about it. So also, you see, I dote on that little girl, Gulnar. "Why does this man dote upon her?" you may ask. "With a reason," say I. This girl when she grows will think of one Gandhi who though a *sanatani* Hindu that would not share meat with her, would not touch beef himself, used to let others eat it if they liked, although he himself worshipped the cow. I might die by the time that girl reaches the year of maturity. When she grows up she will transmit my message. She is today pure and innocent. She thinks everything is right. She knows nothing of hatred. She is all love. I find in her love personified. Therefore, I have been treating her as my very flesh and blood in spite of the sea that divides her from me. I am trying to unite myself with the Mussalmans by this means. She thinks that her Koran makes it lawful for her to kill the cow, while my religion enjoins upon me not to kill the cow. Who am I under the circumstances to prevent her from killing the cow? I would be denying my religion if I did so. But I wish to conquer her by preaching love. I will tell her, "The Koran does not pledge you to kill the cow or eat beef; my religion not

only does not permit it, my Koran compels me to worship the cow. You may eliminate the worship of the cow but you may tolerate *my* abstention from beef, you may tolerate *my* worship of the cow. Out of friendly regard for me you can abstain from killing the cow." That is the secret of my love for the little girl, Gulnar. That is why I allow myself to be carried in the pocket of Maulana Shaukat Ali. Why do I not think of Malaviyaji? Simply because my worship of Malaviyaji is spontaneous. But I am partial to Mussalmans. How can I do otherwise? When you are partial to the Mussalmans you will reach the proper conclusion, proper answer to this equation. If anybody were to say, "Solve this equation, what the Hindus and the Mussalmans should do?" I would say, it is the duty of every Hindu to be partial to the Mussalmans and of every Mussalman to be partial to the Hindus. I find that there is a seer who wants to see God or to meet God in one way and I in another way and, therefore, everything that he does I look askance. Then I say to myself, I must be partial and when I have done that I shall be just. I like to ask the Mussalmans to do that—to be partial to the Hindus.

One thing more she (Mrs. Naidu) asks me to say. It is about the Liberals. "Are you going to say anything about the Liberals?" I can simply say, I worship the Liberals. I want the Liberals to come in the Congress just as much as I want the Swarajists to do so. My heart is laid bare to them. We want to sit and spin at the charkha. "No," they say, "we don't like to sit at the charkha and won't spin." I say, "What shall I do?" If they say, "We won't go to charkha," I simply say to them, "Enter the Congress and drive me out of it."

I have finished. With God as witness I want you to say that whatever you decide to do you will fulfil it even though you may have to die. (Applause.)

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 13-6

382. *PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT BELGAUM CONGRESS*[1]

December 26, 1924

FRIENDS,

It was after much misgiving that I accepted the burden of the honour you have done me today. The unique honour for this year should have been bestowed upon Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, who did such wonderful work both in Kenya and South Africa. But it was not to be. The developments both internal and external have necessitated my acceptance of the burden. I know that I shall have your support in my attempt to do justice to the high office to which you have called me.

At the outset, let me note with respectful feelings the deaths during the year of Bi-Amma, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramania Iyer and Mr. Dalbahadur Giri at home, and of Messrs Rustomjee and P. K. Naidu in South Africa. I tender in your name my respectful condolences to the bereaved families.

RETROSPECTIVE

From the September of 1920 the Congress has been principally an institution for developing strength from within. It has ceased to function by means of resolutions addressed to the Government for redress of grievances. It did so, because it ceased to believe in the beneficial character of the existing system of government. The breach of faith with the Mussalmans of India was the first rude shock to the people's faith in the Government. The Rowlatt Act and O'Dwyerism culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, opened the eyes of the people to the true nature of the system. At the same time it was realized that the existence of the system depended upon the co-operation, whether conscious or unconscious and whether voluntary or forced, of the people. With the view therefore of mending or ending the system it was decided to try to begin withdrawing voluntary co-operation from the top. At the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920, the boycott of Government titles, law-courts, educational institutions, legislative bodies and foreign cloth was resolved upon. All the boycotts were

[1] This printed address appears to have been prepared before December 18; *vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 18-12-1924.

more or less taken up by the parties concerned. Those who could not or would not, retired from the Congress. I do not propose to trace the chequered career of the non-co-operation movement. Though not a single boycott was anywhere near completion, every one of them had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the prestige of the particular institutions boycotted.

The most important boycott was the boycott of violence. Whilst it appeared at one time to be entirely successful, it was soon discovered that the non-violence was only skin-deep. It was the passive non-violence of helplessness, not the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness. The result was an eruption of intolerance against those who did not non-co-operate. This was violence of a subtler type. In spite, however, of this grave defect I make bold to say that the propaganda of non-violence checked the outbreak of physical violence which would certainly have broken out, had not non-violent non-co-operation come into being. It is my deliberate conviction that non-violent non-co-operation has given to the people a consciousness of their strength. It has brought to the surface the hidden powers in the people of resistance through suffering. It has caused an awakening among the masses which perhaps no other method could have.

Though, therefore, non-violent non-co-operation has not brought us swaraj, though it has brought about certain deplorable results and though the institutions that were sought to be boycotted are still flourishing, in my humble opinion, non-violent non-co-operation as a means of attaining political freedom has come to stay and]that even its partial success has brought us nearer swaraj. There is no mistaking the fact that the capacity for suffering for the sake of a cause must advance it.

A Halt

But we are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry halt. For, whilst individuals hold firmly to their belief in non-co-operation, the majority of those who are immediately concerned have practically lost faith in it, with the exception of boycott of foreign cloth. Scores of lawyers have resumed practice. Some even regret having ever given it up. Many who had given up Councils have returned to them and the number of those who believe in Council-entry is on the increase. Hundreds of boys and girls who gave up Government schools and colleges have repented of their action and have returned to them. I hear that Government cshools and colleges can hardly cope with the demand for admission. In these circumstances, these boycotts cannot be worked as part of

the national programme, unless the Congress is prepared to do without the classes directly affected. But I hold it to be just as impracticable to keep these classes out of the Congress as it would be now to keep the non-co-operators out. They must both remain in the Congress, without either party interfering with or hostilely criticizing the other. What is applicable to Hindu-Muslim unity is, I feel, applicable to the unity among different political groups. We must tolerate each other and trust to time to convert the one or the other to the opposite belief. We must go further. We must plead with the Liberals and others who have seceded to rejoin the Congress. If non-co-operation is suspended, there is no reason why they should keep out. The advance must be from us Congressmen. We must cordially invite them and make it easy for them to come in.

You are perhaps now able to see why I entered into the agreement with the Swarajists.

Foreign Cloth Boycott

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend the word "boycott" has been changed in the agreement into "refusal to use foreign cloth". There is no doubt a bad odour about the word "boycott". It usually implies hatred. So far as I am concerned, I have not intended the word to bear any such meaning. The boycott has reference not to British but to foreign cloth. That boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers. This, however, is a digression.

What I wanted to say was that the agreement saves and emphasizes the boycott of foreign cloth. For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts such as personal abuse, irritating conduct, lying, causing hurt and murder are symbols of violence, similarly courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness, etc., are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill will. I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from goodwill and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other tha

has ruined the Indian peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live. The plan, therefore, is not merely to induce the peasant to refuse to buy the cheap and nice-looking foreign fabric but also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers, to dress himself in khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and, for that matter, even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus, boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, i.e., khaddar, not only saves the peasant's money, but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organization of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative socieities or any other form of village organization. It is fraught with the highest political consequence, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffic. If therefore this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain and, as Britain is today the predominant world-power, good even for humanity.

I do not endorse the proposition that supply follows demand. On the contrary, demand is often artificially created by unscrupulous vendors. And if a nation is bound, as I hold it is, like individuals to comply with a code of moral conduct, then it must consider the welfare of those whose wants it seeks to supply. It is wrong and immoral for a nation to supply for instance intoxicating liquor to those who are addicted to drink. What is true of intoxicants is true of grain or cloth, if the discontinuance of their cultivation or manufacture in the country to which foreign grain or cloth are exported results in enforced idleness or penury. These latter hurt a man's soul and body just as much as intoxication. Depression is but excitement upside down and hence equally disastrous in its results and often more so because we have not yet learnt to regard as immoral or sinful the depression of idleness or penury.

Britain's Duty

It is then I hold the duty of Great Britain to regulate her exports with due regard to the welfare of India, as it is India's to

regulate her imports with due regard to her own welfare. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce. And I must confess that my ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts. I do not despair of cultivation of limited mass non-violence. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward.

The fruition of the boycott of foreign cloth through hand-spinning and khaddar is calculated not only to bring about a political result of the first magnitude, it is calculated also to make the poorest of India, whether men or women, conscious of their strength and make them partakers in the struggle for India's freedom.

Foreign *v.* British

It is hardly necessary now to demonstrate the futility, not to say the violent nature, of boycott of British cloth or better still British goods as so many patriots have suggested. I am considering the boycott purely from the point of view of India's good. All British goods do not harm us. Some goods such as English books we need for our intellectual or spiritual benefit. As regards cloth, it is not merely British cloth that harms us, but all foreign cloth, and for that matter to a lesser extent even mill-made cloth injures us. Boycott brought about anyhow of British cloth cannot yield the same results as such boycott brought about by hand-spinning and khaddar. This necessitates exclusion at least of all foreign cloth. The exclusion is not intended as a punishment. It is a necessity of national existence.

Objections Considered

But, say the critics, the spinning-wheel has not taken, it is not exciting enough, it is an occupation only for women, it means a return to the middle ages, it is a vain effort against the majestic march of scientific knowledge for which machinery stands. In my humble opinion India's need is not excitement but solid work. For the millions solid work itself is excitement and tonic at the same time. The fact is that we have not given the spinning-wheel enough trial. I am sorry to have to say that many of us have not given it a serious thought. Even the members of the All-India Congress Committee have failed to carry out the series of resolutions on hand-spinning which they themselves have passed from time to time.

The majority of us have simply not believed in it. In the circumstances, it is hardly just to say that spinning has failed for want of excitement about it. To say that it is merely an old woman's occupation is to ignore facts. Spinning mills are a multiplication of spinning-wheels. They are managed by men. It is time that we got out of this superstition that some occupations are beneath the dignity of men. Under normal conditions no doubt spinning will be the occupation of the gentle sex. But the State of the future will always have to keep some men at the spinning-wheel so as to make improvements in it within the limitations which as a cottage industry it must have. I must inform you that the progress the mechanism of the wheel has made would have been impossible, if some of us men had not worked at it and had not thought about it day and night.

MACHINERY

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning-wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad.

SPINNING FRANCHISE

You will not now wonder at my passion for the spinning-wheel, nor will you wonder why I have ventured to present it for introduction in the franchise, and why Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das have accepted it on behalf of the Swaraj Party. If I had my way, there would be no one on the Congress register who is unwilling to spin or who would not wear khaddar on all occasions. I am however thankful for what the Swaraj Party has accepted. The modification is a concession to weakness or want of faith. But it must serve as a spur to greater effort on the part of those who have full faith in the wheel and khaddar.

NO OTHER MESSAGE

I have thus dilated upon the spinning-wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of swaraj if it is to be by "peaceful and legitimate means". As I have already remarked it is the only

substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by civil disobedience. But civil disobedience for the attainment of swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth. You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning-wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed you would be justified in regarding me, as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress, if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning-wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty in not rejecting my lead. Let it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly once said of us, that we had not the strength and courage to say "No". Indeed your rejection of my proposal, if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards swaraj.

Hindu-Muslim Unity

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning-wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for swaraj is almost universally accepted. I say "almost" because I know some Hindus and some Mussalmans who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Hindu or wholly Mussalman India. Happily their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat's Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The Khilafat agitation in which Hindus made common cause with their Mussalman brethren and the non-co-operation that followed it caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-co-operation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame. I have not the material for the task even if I was

minded for it. Suffice it to say that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Mussalman majority. They have in so far as is possible under a foreign domination effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Mussalmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the Government and would resolutely decline to go back till the Mussalmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Mussalman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Mussalmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's friendliness. A Government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a swaraj government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign, in reality a veiled military rule, has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has, therefore, the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no swaraj government with any pretension to being a popular government can possibly be organized and maintained on a war footing. A swaraj government means a government established by the free joint will of Hindus, Mussalmans and others. Hindus and Mussalmans, if they desire swaraj, have perforce to settle their differences amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All Parties Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Mussalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majority must set the example of self-sacrifice.

Untouchability

Untouchability is another hindrance to swaraj. Its removal is just as essential for swaraj as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindus cannot claim or take swaraj till they have restored the liberty of the suppresed classes. They have sunk with the latter's suppression. Historians tell us that the Aryan invaders treated the original inhabitants of Hindustan precisely as the English invaders treat us, if not much worse. If so, our helotry is a just retribution for our having created an untouchable class. The sooner we remove the blot, the better it is for us Hindus. But the priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I claim to know something of Hinduism. I am certain that the priests are wrong. It is a blasphemy to say that God set apart any portion of humanity as untouchables. And Hindus who are Congressmen have to see to it that they break down the barrier at the earliest possible moment. The Vykom satyagrahis are showing us the way. They are carrying on their battle with gentleness and firmness. They have patience, courage and faith. Any movement in which these qualities are exhibited becomes irresistible.

I would however warn the Hindu brethren against the tendency which one sees nowadays of exploiting the suppressed classes for a political end. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the untouchables, not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us "superior" Hindus to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our downtrodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression. Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. They descend equally upon all who wait upon God. The religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of the earth which pins its faith to injustice, untruth or violence. God is Light, not darkness. God is Love, not hate. God is Truth, not untruth. God alone is Great. We His creatures are but dust. Let us be humble and recognize the place of the lowliest of His creatures. Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else. Love is the root of religion or sacrifice and this perishable body is the root of self or irreligion, says Tulsidas. Whether we win swaraj or not, the Hindus have to purify themselves before they can hope torevive the Vedic philosophy and make it a living reality.

SWARAJ SCHEME

But the spinning-wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability are only means to an end. The end we do not know. For me it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life. But I have long professed my conversion to the view pressed upon the public by Babu Bhagwandas that the public must know the end, not vaguely but precisely. They must know the full definition of swaraj, i.e., the scheme of swaraj which all India wants and must fight for. Happily the Committee appointed by the All Parties Conference is charged with that mission and let us hope that the Committee will be able to produce a scheme that will be acceptable to all parties. May I suggest for its consideration the following points?

1. The qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work, such for example as suggested for the Congress franchise. Literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the Government and the well-being of the State.

2. The ruinous military expenditure should be curtailed to the proportion necessary for protection of life and property in normal times.

3. Administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decisions of these panchayats to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case law should be abolished and the general procedure should be simplified. We have slavishly followed the cumbrous and worn-out English procedure. The tendency in the Colonies is to simplify the procedure so as to make it easy for litigants to plead their own cases.

4. Revenues from intoxicating liquors and drugs should be abolished.

5. Salaries of the civil and military service should be brought down to a level compatible with the general condition of the country.

6. There should be re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis with as complete autonomy as possible for every province for its internal administration and growth.

7. Appointment of a commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and, subject to the findings of the commission, full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired.

8. Full guarantee of their status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government subject to the right of asylum to subjects of these States who, not being offenders against the Penal Code, may seek it in self-governing India.

9. Repeal of all arbitrary powers.

10. The highest post to be open to all who may be otherwise fit. Examination for the civil and military service to be in India.

11. Recognition of complete religious freedom to various denominations subject to mutual forbearance.

12. The official language for provincial governments, legislatures and courts, within a definite period, to be the vernacular of the province; of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal, to be Hindustani; the script to be either Devanagari or Persian. The language of the Central Government and of the Central Legislature to be also Hindustani. The language of international diplomacy to be English.

I trust you will not laugh at what may appear to you to be extravagance of thought in the foregoing sketch of some of the requirements of swaraj as I would have it. We may not have the power today to take or receive or do the things I have mentioned. Have we the will? Let us at least cultivate the desire. Before I leave this highly attractive, because speculative, theme, let me assure the Committee in charge of the drafting of a swaraj scheme, that I claim for my suggestion no more attention than it would give to any single individual's. I have incorporated them in my address only to gain greater currency for them than they would perhaps otherwise receive.

Independence

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectly honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want under every conceivable circumstance complete independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for swaraj within the Empire, but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the world

desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will have no real alliance with India. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not of independence without alliance. I would urge every Congressman not to be insistent on independence in each and every case, not because there is anything impossible about it, but because it is wholly unnecessary till it has become perfectly manifest that Britain really means subjugation in spite of her declaration to the contrary.

The Swaraj Party

So far, then, I have considered the contents of the agreement and the general questions arising from it. Not much need be said about the status of equality given to the Swaraj Party. I wish I could have avoided it, not because the party is not worthy, but because I do not share its views about Council-entry. But if I must remain in the Congress and even lead it, I must recognize facts as they are. It was easy enough for me to go out of the Congress or to decline the honour of presiding. But it was not, so I thought and still think, in the interest of the country for me to take that step. The Swaraj Party represents, if not a majority, at least a strong and growing minority in the Congress. If I was not to divide the Congress on the issue of its status, I was bound to agree to its conditions so long as they were not in conflict with my conscience. They are not in my opinion unreasonable. The Swarajists want to use the name of the Congress for their policy. A formula had to be found for their doing so without their pledging or binding the No-changers to their policy. One of the ways of doing it was to give it the authority and the responsibility both financial and executive with regard to the framing and the prosecution of their policy. The Congress as a whole could not guide that policy without sharing the responsibility. And as I could not take the responsibility, and as I apprehended no No-changer can, I could not be party to shaping the policy, nor could I shape it without my heart in it. And heart can only go where belief is. I know that the sole

authority to the Swaraj Party to use the name of the Congress in regard to the Council programme makes somewhat awkward the position of the other parties wishing to join the Congress. But I fear it is inevitable. The Swaraj Party cannot be expected to surrender the advantage it possesses. After all it wants the advantage not for itself but for the service of the country. All parties have or can have that ambition or no other. I hope therefore that the others will join the Congress and work from within to affect the course of the country's politics. Dr. Besant has led the way in that direction. I know that she would have many things done otherwise, but she is content to come in hoping to bring round the electorate to her view by working within the Congress. The No-changers can, in my humble opinion, vote for the agreement with a clear conscience. The only national programme jointly to be worked by all the parties is khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, for the Hindus, removal of untouchability. Is not this after all what they want?

Purely Social Reform?

It has been suggested that this programme turns the Congress into a purely social reform organization. I beg to differ from that view. Everything that is absolutely essential for swaraj is more than merely social work and must be taken up by the Congress. It is not suggested that the Congress should confine its activity for all time to this work only. But it is suggested that the Congress should for the coming year concentrate the whole of its energy on the work of construction, or as I have otherwise described it, the work of internal growth.

Nor does the agreement exhaust the list of constructive items that the Congress must handle. Those I am about to mention are of the highest importance, but they, being non-contentious and not absolutely essential for swaraj as the foregoing three items, find no mention in the agreement.

National Schools

One such is the maintenance of national educational institutions. Probably the public do not know that next to khaddar the running of national educational institutions has been the most successful. These cannot be given up so long as even a few pupils are left. It must be a point of honour with the respective provinces to keep up their colleges and schools. Suspension of non-co-operation should not have any injurious effect on these institutions. On the contrary, greater effort than ever before should

be made to maintain and strengthen them. Most provinces have their national schools and colleges. Gujarat alone has a national university maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000 and having control of three colleges and 70 schools with 9,000 pupils. It has acquired its own ground at Ahmedabad and has already spent Rs. 2,05,323 in buildings. Throughout the country, finest and silent work has been done by the non-co-operating students. Theirs is a great and noble sacrifice. From a worldly standpoint they have perhaps lost the prospect of brilliant careers. I suggest to them however that from the national standpoint they have gained more than they have lost. They left their schools or colleges, because it was through them that the youth of the nation were insulted and humiliated in the Punjab. The first link in the chain of our bondage is forged in these institutions. The corresponding national institutions, however inefficiently managed they may be, are the factories where the first instruments of our freedom are forged. After all, the hope of the future centres round the boys and girls studying in these national institutions. I therefore regard the upkeep of these institutions as a first charge on provincial funds. But these institutions to be truly national must be clubs for promoting real Hindu-Muslim unity, they must be also nurseries for training Hindu boys and girls to regard untouchability as a blot upon Hinduism and a crime against humanity. They should be training schools for expert spinners and weavers. If the Congress retains its belief in the potency of the spinning-wheel and khaddar, one has a right to expect these institutions to supply the science of the spinning-wheel. They should be also factories for khaddar production. This is not to say that the boys and the girls are not to have any literary training. But I do maintain that the training of the hand and the heart must go hand-in-hand with that of the head. The quality and the usefulness of a national school or college will be measured not by the brilliance of the literary attainments of its scholars but by the strength of the national character, and deftness in handling the carding-bow, the spinning-wheel and the loom. Whilst I am most anxious that no national school or college should be closed, I should have not the slightest hesitation in closing down a school or college that is indifferent to the admission of non-Hindu boys or that shuts its door against the entry of untouchables or that has not carding and spinning as an indispensable part of the training. The time is past when we can be satisfied with the word "national" on the signboard of the school and the knowledge that it is not affiliated to any Government

university or is not otherwise controlled by the Government. I must also not omit to point out that the tendency in many national institutions still is to neglect the vernaculars and Hindustani. Many teachers have not realized the necessity of imparting instruction through the vernaculars or Hindustani. I rejoice to observe that Sjt. Gangadharrao has arranged a meeting of national educationists to exchange experiences on the several points mentioned by me and to evolve, if possible, a general plan of education and action.

Unemployed Non-co-operators

This is perhaps the proper place to mention those lawyers who have given up practice, and schoolmasters and other Government employees who have given up Government service at the call of the nation. I know that there are many such men who find it hard to make the two ends meet. They deserve national support. The Khadi Board and the national schools and colleges are the two services that can take in almost an unlimited number of honest and industrious men who are willing to learn and labour and are satisfied with a modest allowance. I observe a tendency not to accept any remuneration for national service. This desire to serve without remuneration is praiseworthy, but all cannot satisfy it. Every labourer is worthy of his hire. No country can produce thousands of unpaid whole-time workers. We must therefore develop an atmosphere in which a patriot would consider it an honour to serve the country and accept an allowance for such service.

Intoxicants

Another item of national importance is the liquor and the opium traffic. Had the wave of enthusiasm that swept across the country in 1921 in the cause of temperance remained non-violent, we would today have witnessed a progressive improvement. But unfortunately our picketing degenerated into violence, veiled when it was not open. Picketing had, therefore, to be abandoned, and the liquor shops and opium-dens began to flourish as before. But you will be pleased to hear that the temperance work has not died out altogether. Many workers are still continuing their quiet and selfless service in the cause of temperance. We must, however, realize that we would not be able to eradicate the evil till we have swaraj. It is no matter of pride to us that our children are being educated out of the revenue derived from this immoral source. I would almost forgive the Council-entry by Congressmen, if they would boldly sweep out this revenue even

though education may have to be starved. Nothing of the kind should happen if they will insist on a corresponding reduction in the military expenditure.

Bengal Repression

You will observe that in the foregoing paragraphs I have confined myself to the internal developments.

But the external circumstances, and among them chiefly the acts of our rulers, are affecting our destiny no less surely (though it may be adversely) than the internal development. We may turn them to advantage if we will, or we may succumb to them to our disadvantage. The latest act of the rulers is the repression commenced in Bengal. The All Parties Conference condemned it in no uncertain terms. The Conference had hesitation in saying that the blow was aimed at the Bengal Swaraj Party. But I have none. I have been to Calcutta and had the opportunity of meeting men representing a variety of opinion and I came to the conclusion that the blow was aimed at the Swaraj party. The opinion is confirmed by the speeches since delivered by Lords Lytton and Reading. The defence they have offered is wholly unconvincing. Such a defence is possible only in a place like India where public opinion counts for little or nothing. Lord Lytton's conditions of release are an insult to our intelligence. Their Excellencies beg the question when they tell us that the situation warranted the Ordinance and the action under the Regulation of 1818. The national contention is

1. that the situation they describe has not been proved to exist;
2. that assuming that the situation does exist, the remedy is worse than the disease;
3. that the ordinary law contains enough powers for dealing with the situation; and lastly
4. that even if extraordinary powers were necessary they should have been taken from the legislature which is of their own creation.

The speeches of Their Excellencies evade these issues altogether. The nation which has had considerable experience of unsupported statements of the Government will not accept them as gospel truth. Their Excellencies know that we cannot and will not believe their statements not because they are wilfully untruthful, but because the sources of their information have often been discovered to be tainted. Their assurances are therefore a mockery of the people. The speeches are almost a challenge to

us to do our worst. But we must not be irritated or be impatient. Repression, if it does not cow us down, if it does not deter us from our purpose, can but hasten the advent of swaraj; for it puts us on our mettle and evokes the spirit of self-sacrifice and courage in the face of danger. Repression does for a true man or a nation what fire does for gold. In 1921, we answered repression with civil disobedience and invited the Government to do its worst. But today we are obliged to eat the humble pie. We are not ready for civil disobedience. We can but prepare for it. Preparation for civil disobedience means discipline, self-restraint, a non-violent but resisting spirit, cohesion and above all scrupulous and willing obedience to the known laws of God and such laws of man as are in furtherance of God's laws. But unfortunately we have neither discipline nor self-restraint enough for our purpose, we are either violent or our non-violence is unresisting, we have not enough cohesion and the laws that we obey whether of God or man, we obey compulsorily. As between Hindus and Mussalmans we witness a daily defiant breach of laws both of God and man. This is no atmosphere for civil disobedience —the one matchless and invincible weapon at the disposal of the oppressed. The alternative is undoubtedly violence. We seem to have the atmosphere for it. Hindu-Muslim fights are our training for it. And those who believe that India's deliverance lies through violence are entitled to gloat over the free fights that take place between us. But I say to those who believe in the cult of violence: "You are retarding India's progress. If you have any pity or friendly feeling for the starving millions, know that your violence will do them no service. Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organized than you are. You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death. You know that this Government believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence. Whatever may be true of other countries, there is no chance of the cult of violence flourishing in this country. India is admittedly the best repository and exponent of non-violence. Will you not better devote your lives, if you sacrifice them in the cause of non-violence?"

I know, however, that my appeal to the violent revolutionaries will be just as fruitless as any such appeal to the violent and anarchical Government is likely to be.

We must therefore find the remedy and demonstrate to both the violent Government and the violent revolutionaries that there is a force that is more effective than their violence.

Repression a Symptom

I regard this repression as a chronic symptom of a chronic disease. The European dominance and Asiatic subjection is the formula. Sometimes it is stated still more cryptically as White *v.* Black. Kipling miscalled the white man's yoke as the "white man's burden". In the Malaya peninsula the colour bar that was thought to be temporary has now almost become a permanent institution. The Mauritius planter must get Indian labour without let or hindrance. The Kenya Europeans successfully lord it over Indians who have a prior right to be there. The Union of South Africa would today drive out every Indian, if it safely could, in total disregard of past obligations. In all these cases the Government of India and the Imperial Government are not helpless; they are unwilling or not so insistent as they ought to be on the protection of Indian settlers. The Government of India has not shown even the decency to publish the report of its own Commission on Fiji.

The attempt to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis is a symptom of the same disease. They have poured their blood like water for the sake of a cause they hold as dear as life itself. They may have erred. If they have, it is they who have bled in the process. They have hurt no one else. Nankana Sahib, Guruka-Bagh, and Jaito will bear witness to their courage and their mute sufferings and martyrdom. But the Governor of the Punjab is reported to have vowed that he will crush the Akalis.

One hears that repression is crushing the Burmese spirit.

Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer—certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not only a detestable crime, but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it?

The repression in Bengal is therefore not an extraordinary thing. We must treat its periodic eruption in some shape or other, or in some province or other, as our normal condition till we come to our own.

Need for Sanction

The Congress, therefore, to be worthy of its trust must devise a sanction to back its demands. Before we can forge the sanction, we Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, etc.,

must unite and so should Swarajists, No-changers, Liberals, Home Rulers, Muslim Leaguers and others. If we can but speak with a united voice and know our own mind, it would be well. If we can develop the power to keep foreign cloth from our land, it would be better. We are ready then for the sanction.

My Faith

Let me state my faith; as a Congressman wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-co-operation for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot—will not—do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely a policy with me, it is an article of faith. Non-co-operation and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called satyagraha. It is my *kalpadruma—Jam-i-Jam* —the Universal Provider. Satyagraha is search for Truth; and God is Truth. Ahimsa or non-violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. Swaraj for me is part of that Truth. This satyagraha did not fail me in South Africa, Kheda or Champaran and in a host of other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore, I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to the English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It has succeeded, but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair. On the contrary I believe that India will come to her own in the near future, and that only through satyagraha. The proposed suspension is part of the experiment. Non-co-operation need never be resumed if the programme sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-co-operation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have repeatedly stated that satyagraha never fails and that one perfect satyagrahi is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in everyone of us. Like swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know it.

Young India, 26-12-1924

383. SPEECH ON CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 26, 1924

It was 4.05 p.m. when the President moved the first resolution. He said:

I shall now read the first resolution. After I read the resolution, you will kindly stand. It is incredibly simple; our condolence to those who are no longer with us.

This Congress records with sorrow the deaths of Bi-Amma, Sir Ashutosh Chowdhari, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramania Ayyar, Mr. Dalbahadur Giri, Mr. Govind Venkatesh Yalgi, Mr. Vamana Rao Moharir, Mr. T. V. Gopalswami Mudaliar, Mr. C. V. P. Shivam and Lala Kanhya Lalji and also of Messrs Rustomjee Jeevanji Ghorkhodu and P. K. Naidu in South Africa and tenders its respectful sympathy to the bereaved families.

Then the President explained the resolution in Hindi.[1]

This resolution expresses our sorrow at the passing of Bi-Amma and others and conveys our sympathies to their relatives. I know none amongst us can have anything to say against this. You will therefore all stand up for a few minutes and resume your seats when I sit down. This will indicate our acceptance of the resolution.

All stood up. A murmur was heard somewhere upon which Gandhiji said:

All of you in the centre should stand up. There should be no one sitting. And please maintain silence. No one should speak. If we want to show the respect we feel for the dead we should stand in silence for a few seconds. . . . Now please take your seats.

C. R. Das mounted the rostrum amid great applause. "Deshbandhu Das", Gandhiji announced. Then he added:

Malaviyaji has just sent me a message. I am sorry I forgot about it. Lala Kanhya Lal of Lahore passed away this year. You must all have heard about Lala Kanhya Lal. He was an old man and he served the country well during the Dyer regime.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 9-13

[1] What follows is from a report of the proceedings in Hindi.

384. RESOLUTION ON CALCUTTA AGREEMENT AND SPINNING FRANCHISE, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 26, 1924

(a) (i) The Congress hereby endorses the following agreement between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Deshbandhu C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru acting on behalf of the Swaraj Party on the other.

THE AGREEMENT[1]

(ii) The Congress hopes that the agreement will result in true unity between the two wings of the Congress and will also enable persons belonging to other political organizations to join the Congress. The Congress congratulates the Swarajists and others arrested under the New Ordinance or Regulation III of 1818 and is of opinion that such arrests are inevitable so long as the people of India have not the capacity for vindicating their status and liberty, and is further of opinion that such capacity can in the present circumstances of the country be developed by achieving the long-deferred exclusion of foreign cloth; and therefore as a token of the earnestness and determination of the people to achieve this national purpose, welcomes the introduction of hand-spinning as part of the franchise and appeals to every person to avail himself or herself of it and join the Congress.

(iii) In view of the foregoing, the Congress expects every Indian, man and woman, to discard all foreign cloth and to use and wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of all other cloth. With a view to accomplish the said purpose without delay, the Congress expects all Congress members to help the spread of hand-spinning and the antecedent processes and the manufacture and sale of khaddar.

(iv) The Congress appeals to the Princes and the wealthy classes of India and the members of political and other organizations not represented on the Congress, and municipalities, local boards, panchayats and such other institutions, to extend their help to the spread of hand-spinning by personal use and otherwise and especially by giving liberal patronage to the classes of artists, still surviving and capable of working artistic designs in fine khaddar.

[1] Not reproduced here; for the text of the Agreement *vide* "Joint Statement with Swaraj Party Leaders", 6-11-1924.

(v) The Congress appeals to the merchants engaged in the foreign cloth and yarn trade to appreciate the interests of the nation and discontinue their importation of foreign cloth and yarn and help the national cottage industry by dealing in khaddar.

(vi) It having come to the notice of the Congress that varieties of cloth are manufactured in mills and on other looms out of mill yarn and sold in the Indian market as khaddar, the Congress appeals to the mill-owners and other manufacturers concerned, to discontinue this undesirable practice and further appeals to them to encourage the revival of the ancient cottage industry of India by restricting their operations among those parts of the country that have not yet come under the Congress influence and appeals to them to discontinue the importation of foreign yarn.

(vii) The Congress appeals to the heads and leaders of all religious denominations whether Hindu, Muslim or any other to preach to their congregations the message of khaddar and advise them to discontinue the use of foreign cloth.

(b) The present Article VII[1] of the Constitution to be repealed and the following to be substituted therefor:

(i) Every person not disqualified under article IV[2] shall be entitled to become a member of any primary organization controlled by the Provincial Congress Committee, provided that no one shall be a member of any Congress Committee or organization who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business and does not make a contribution of 20,000 yards of evenly spun yarn per year of his or her own spinning, or in the case of illness or unwillingness or any such cause, the same quantity of yarn spun by any other person; provided also that no person shall be a member of two parallel Congress organizations at one and the same time.

(ii) The year of the membership shall be reckoned from the 1st January to the 31st December. The said subscription shall be payable in advance and may be paid in instalments of 2,000 yards per month payable in advance. Members joining in the middle of the year shall contribute the full quantity due from the beginning of the year.

[1] Which read: "Every person not disqualified under Article IV and paying a subscription of 4 annas per year shall be entitled to become a member of any organization controlled by the Provincial Congress Committees." *Vide* Vol. XIX, p. 192.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XIX, p. 191.

TRANSITORY PROVISION

During 1925, the subscription shall be 20,000 yards only and shall be payable on or before 1st March or in instalments as aforesaid.

(iii) No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives or delegates or any committee or sub-committee of any Congress organization whatsoever, or to be elected as such, or to take part in any meetings of the Congress or any Congress organization or any committee or sub-committee thereof, if he has not contributed the yarn subscription or the instalments due. Any member who has made default in the payment of the yarn subscription may have his or her rights restored by paying the subscription in respect of which the default has occurred and the instalment for the month then current.

(iv) Every Provincial Congress Committee shall send to the General Secretary, All-India Congress Committee, from month to month returns of membership and of the yarn received by it in virtue of this Article. The Provincial Congress Committee shall contribute ten per cent of the yarn subscriptions or their value to the All-India Congress Committee.

(v) Omit present Article VI (c)[1] and Article IX (b)[2]

Proposed by:

DESHBANDHU C. R. DAS (in English)

Seconded by:

SJT. S. V. KAUJALGI (Both in Kanarese and English)
SJT. N. C. KELKAR (in Marathi)
SJT. S. V. ABHYANKAR (in English)
PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU (in English)

Opposed by:

MAULANA HASRAT MOHANI (in Urdu)
MAULANA AZAD SOBHANI (in Urdu)
SWAMI GOVINDANANDA (in English)

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[1] & [2] *Vide* Vol. XIX, pp. 192-3.

385. *SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON CALCUTTA AGREEMENT, BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 26, 1924

The resolution was moved by Deshbandhu C. R. Das. There were many speakers on the resolution and when Swami Govindananda finished his speech, the President said:

I shall not try your patience for any length of time. I have got two speakers more. I am endeavouring to give chance, if I can possibly do, to those who oppose this resolution. I may now call upon one more speaker to oppose the resolution and then I shall ask Pandit Motilal Nehru to wind up. I call upon Sardar Ali Sabri from Cawnpore. Is he here?

A reply: "Not here." Then Pandit Motilal Nehru came to speak . . . . It was 7.25 p.m. when the debate on the resolution was closed. The President then rose amidst loud and continued cries of *Mahatma Gandhiki jai* to put the resolution to vote. He spoke in Hindi announcing the timings of the sittings of the Congress and other conferences, and with regard to the voting on the resolution he said:

BROTHERS,

Before I place before you this resolution I would like to read out the notes some friends have sent to me. One or two friends have said that as there have been so many speeches on behalf of the Swarajists and only one, that of Mahomed Ali, on behalf of the No-changers, Mr. Rajagopalachari should be asked to make a speech. I do not wish to give Mr. Rajagopalachari this trouble, although his name is there on the list. Because, as Panditji has said, I do not wish that anyone should be influenced to take a position. You may vote as you like. So I do not wish to trouble Mr. Rajagopalachari, much as the No-changers want that he speak something before the vote is taken.

A brother from Andhra says that he is a follower of Dr. Annie Besant and wants to say something in support of her. He wants to speak on her behalf because Dr. Annie Besant, although she was expected, has not come. Another friend has asked why we are proposing the whole resolution and why we don't move it in parts. Maulana Hasrat Mohani has answered this. This indicates an attitude of inaction. It does not come from the heart. If you want to you may vote, otherwise not. If you have a desire to take

up the charkha it is possible. There is another No-changer who also wants to speak but I do not wish to trouble him. So many Swarajists have spoken that there is now no time left. Several other friends have misgivings. I have their notes. The only way to remove their misgivings would be to give them some time to speak out their minds.

How much will the people benefit from the candour Deshbandhu Das and others have shown in their speeches? Mr. Abhyankar said his opinion differed from mine, yet he gave his support to the charkha. Panditji says he will trust the charkha as I do. It has been put down in writing and he will respect the written word. We should have faith that he will have no cause for misgivings. One thing is essential: that he should trust the No-changers and the No-changers should trust him. That there should be this mutual trust is put down here in writing and therefore I wish to have your views. It is necessary that both groups should treat one another as brothers. As Deshbandhu Das has said, we believe that one thing is good for the country; we believe also that the other thing will also be good for the country . . . .[1] Mr. Kelkar in his speech used an image. I might use another and say that a cart will not run on a single wheel; it will run only when both its wheels are in shape and strong, otherwise it will collapse. I therefore appeal to you to purge your hearts. Maulana Shaukat Ali will come to you and say that you should become brave. Others will say other things. Only a cowardly man distrusts another man. The man who has courage will trust even his enemy. If you would accept this resolution give up distrusting one another; do away with all misgivings. Having said this much I wonder if it is still necessary to speak in English. I shall do so if some of you desire it, but I do not think it is necessary.

Now I place before you the resolution and ask for your verdict. But before you give your verdict let me remind you of what I have said : please treat it as a pledge—with yourselves, me and God as witnesses. It will be terrible indeed if anyone having taken the pledge should not act on it. You will ply the charkha. If you find it difficult and do not want to take the trouble, borrow the yarn from someone and tender it. If you are not prepared to do even this do not vote for the resolution. If you wish to work unitedly it is necessary to adopt this resolution. But if you do not want this, if you do not wish to mix the charkha with the franchise, please do not under any circumstances vote for the resolution. I

[1] The source is not clear here.

shall not mind it at all as I shall if you accept it and then do not go by it. I must therefore ask you that if you have any pity for me act on your word; you should not take it that there is any betrayal in not voting.

I propose this resolution and I hope you will not unanimously deceive God. I have come to know Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das well. When they once agree to a thing they do not say no afterwards. So you will either accept or reject this resolution. Even if you reject it you should be clear in your mind as to the importance of the charkha. I hold we can secure everything through the charkha. You should accept the resolution if you wish that the No-changers should love the Swarajists and the Swarajists should love the No-changers. Mr. Kelkar has said that there should be "responsive co-operation" from both sides. If you understand this and accept this, please raise your hands; if you do not accept this please do not raise your hands. In that case I shall think of some other method of making India free. Those who are in favour of the resolution may raise their hands.

The President said in English (before putting the resolution to vote):

Those who are in favour of this resolution, please raise your hands understanding the warning that I have given you that God be witness between you and India; if you accept the resolution and mean to work to the best of your ability, then alone will you raise your hands.

Sjt. Gangadharrao Deshpande said in Kanarese what the President had said.

In asking the House to raise hands, the President said:

Only delegates, please. Those only who have understood the resolution.

After examining the hands raised in favour and against the resolution, he said:

I declare the resolution carried.

The sitting of the Congress was adjourned for the next day at 11 o'clock sharp.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 70-2

386. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA STUDENTS' CONFERENCE, BELGAUM

December 27, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi arrived at the *pandal* and was accorded a warm welcome. In compliance with the request of the president and the audience, the Mahatma spoke most feelingly for about 10 minutes. He exhorted the students to practise swadeshi and wear khaddar. He explained as to how the salvation of India was bound up with the spread of the spinning-wheel. He told the audience that he was not prepared to admit the plea of want of time. They could do the work provided they had the will to do it. Finally he declared that khaddar was not the symbol of hatred of anybody but that it was the symbol of love and self-dependence. The Mahatma was then garlanded amidst loud applause. The president thanked him for blessing the Conference after which the Mahatma left the *pandal*.

The Bombay Chronicle, 2-1-1924

387. SPEECH ON CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

It was 11.20 a.m. when the President moved the following resolution:

The Congress records with sorrow the death of Mr. G. M. Bhurgari and tenders its respectful sympathy to the bereaved family.

Before putting the resolution to vote the President remarked[1]:

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am ashamed to have to say that there was an omission when we passed the first resolution. A friend from Sind has brought it to my notice that in the resolution mourning the loss of our departed leaders a name was left out—that of Mr. Bhurgari.

I think you know it and will agree when I say that I could not have deliberately left out this name. But I am in such a pitiable state that I tend to forget things when I am engrossed in work. It was with great difficulty that I wrote down the names that I did—it was in the address I had prepared—and since I myself wrote the address I was not aware of the omission. I would

[1] In Hindi

have written Mr. Bhurgari's name most respectfully. In my heart also I had the greatest respect for him. I have committed an ommission and I apologize for this to his relatives. The fact is I had a great regard for him. He was a Sindi Mussalman and he loved Hindus. When I go to Sind people there say that Mr. Bhurgari was a true son of India. Why should we not mourn his loss? I request you, brothers and sisters, to rise from your seats and stand respectfully for one minute. Let no one keep sitting; all must stand up. . . .

Now all of you should maintain silence. Do not talk. We have to finish our programme, if possible by 5 o'clock. In this I seek the help of all the delegates. Concerning the first resolution that will be moved today no discussion is necessary and so no lengthy explanation is called for. Therefore I shall simply read it out. I also want to say that no copies have been distributed amongst you of the resolutions that will be moved today. The Reception Committee was not able to do this; there is no press in Belgaum so that all the resolutions that the Reception Committee wanted to print could be printed. The Subjects Committee can continue its sittings for two or three days and the resolutions that it drafts can be printed. But there is no resolution which makes it necessary to distribute its copies amongst you. You will forgive me as well as the Reception Committee for this, and pass the resolutions as they are read out to you.[1]

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, p. 74

388. RESOLUTION ON SAROJINI NAIDU'S SERVICES, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

The President next moved the following resolution:

The Congress places on record its appreciation of the great services rendered to the cause of the Indians overseas by Shrimati Sarojini Naidu who by her energy and devotion endeared herself to the Indian settlers and by her persuasive eloquence gained a sympathetic hearing from the Europeans there.

The Congress also notes with gratitude the services rendered to the cause of the settlers of Kenya by Mr. Vaze of the Servants of India Society and Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi.

[1] The resolution was carried *nem. con.*, all standing for a while in silence.

The Hindi and Kanarese renderings of the above resolution were then read by Pandit Sunder Lal and Sjt. K. Mudvedkar respectively.

The resolution was carried unanimously all standing except Shrimati Sarojini Devi.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, p. 75

389. *SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON KOHAT AND GULBURGA RIOTS, BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 27, 1924

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You have heard many speeches concerning this resolution[1]. I have received intimations that some more friends are anxious to take part in the discussion. But I have told them to excuse me. I do not feel anything more needs to be known about the resolution.

A friend refers to the Board mentioned in the resolution and wants to know the names of the personnel. There are two things mentioned. If the Board appointed by the Unity Conference does not do its work it can be replaced by another Board. I forget all the names that comprise the Board of the Unity Committee; you will see them in the newspapers. I am there, Shaukat Ali is there and some other Muslim brethren. I do not want to leave it either. I think the Board that has been appointed will collect testimony in regard to the happenings at Kohat. Only when it arrives in Rawalpindi can it be known as to what it is possible to do and what it is not. Whatever can be done will of course be done. Those of you who support the resolution may duly raise their hands.[2]

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, p. 94

[1] The resolution moved by Motilal Nehru deplored the riots, the exodus of Hindus from Kohat and the failure of the local authority to give them protection. It also advised the people not to accept the finding of the Government of India but to suspend judgment till the Board appointed by the Unity Conference or some other representative body had enquired into the event and come to a decision. The resolution expressed sympathy for the sufferers in Gulburga riots.

[2] The resolution was carried.

390. SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON UNTOUCHABILITY, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

I call upon Mr. Bhopatkar to move the resolution on untouchability.

Before doing so, let me inform you that some Tamil friends have written to me asking that the resolutions might also be translated into Tamil. I am extremely sorry that I cannot possibly do that. There are 21 provinces to deal with and if we are to render each resolution into so many languages it would really be not possible to get on. Up to now we have been adopting three languages: One is Hindi which everyone is expected to know; the second is English; and the third is the vernacular of the province. We have not been able to reach that common medium, Hindustani, through which we can know each other, because we have always the South to obstruct the way. That is why we are using the vernacular of this province as well as English. But I would suggest for such cases that those who know English or Hindustani in the said province should take the trouble of explaining the resolutions passed here to their friends who do not know any of the languages here spoken. . . . [1]

BROTHERS,

I am sorry to say that Panditji is not here at the moment. I had been asked—and I requested him to say something. He said he did not want to say anything. Then again I was told that he would say a few words. But at this time he is not here.

Before I put this resolution to vote I must answer a note that I have received. A friend asks if the resolution on removal of untouchability implies inter-dining and intermarriage with the untouchables. There is nothing in the resolution suggesting this, but if this friend wants to know what I myself feel in the matter I will say that I have expressed my views in *Navajivan* and *Young India* —namely, that we should behave with those we consider untouchables as we behave with other castes.

[1] After some speakers had supported the resolution the President called upon Madan Mohan Malaviya to speak. As he was absent, the President put the resolution to vote speaking in Hindi.

There was one hand raised against the resolution. The President declered it carried.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 95 & 98

391. SPEECH AT CONGRESS SESSION, BELGAUM[1]

December 27, 1924

BROTHERS,

Before I move the next resolution I have an atonement to make. When the resolution on removal of untouchability was being moved I had it in mind to present an untouchable brother before you. I had received a note saying an untouchable brother who was not a delegate wanted to say a few words. I had felt that even though he was not a delegate it would be good to permit him to speak as he was an untouchable. And so I had wanted to call him. But I forgot. The only way I now can atone for it is to apologize to him. Anyway, it is good that I remembered in time.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 104-5

392. SPEECH ON ANNIE BESANT'S STATEMENT, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

Now, before I proceed to the other resolutions I have to announce to you that Dr. Besant feels that she must make a statement before this House in connection with the resolution[2] we passed yesterday. I do not wish to anticipate what the illustrious lady has got to say. But I think I voice the feelings of this House when I tender my congratulations to her for gracing this *pandal* with her presence. Whether she and her devoted followers are able to remain in the Congress or not, I may

[1] Before permitting a *Panchama* boy to speak for two minutes

[2] *Vide* "Resolution on Calcutta Agreement and Spinning Franchise, Belgaum Congress, 26-12-1924,

hope that we will always have her sympathy and moral support with us. I now request Dr. Besant to make her statement . . . .

FRIENDS,

You have heard the statement that Dr. Besant has made. You will not expect me to make any remarks upon that statement. Dr. Besant has not made the statement, as I know, in order that she may have reply just now. She has made that statement from a sense of duty so that her silence might not be construed into meaning that we had her assent to the resolution that we passed yesterday. But I hope I may give her the assurance of this Congress that all that she has said will command our respectful attention and that no stone will be left unturned by this Congress or Congressmen and Congresswomen to open the door wide, as wide as is humanly possible, for the entrance of every party that has the interest of India at heart and every party whose goal is swaraj for India. With these words I close this incident, repeating my request to Dr. Besant that whether she and other parties are able to join the Congress or not, the Congress will always expect her and every party's sympathy and support in anything and everything that may commend itself to their attention.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 105 & 107-8

393. RESOLUTIONS MOVED FROM THE CHAIR, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

The President next moved the following resolutions one by one and put each to vote and declared each carried. The resolutions were read by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in English, by Sjt. Mudvedkar in Kanarese, and by Pandit Sundar Lal in Hindi.

RESOLUTION X: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Congress is strongly of opinion that the hope of the future of the country lies in its youth and therefore trusts that the Provincial Committees will strive more vigorously than they have done to keep alive all national educational institutions. But whilst the Congress is of opinion that existing national educational institutions should be maintained and new ones opened, the Congress does not regard any such institution to be national which does not employ some Indian language as the medium of instruction, and

which does not actively encourage Hindu-Muslim unity, education among untouchables and removal of untouchability; which does not make hand-spinning, carding and training in physical culture and self-defence obligatory; and in which teachers and students over the age of 12 years do not spin for at least half an hour per working day and in which students and teachers do not habitually wear khaddar.

Resolution XI: Paid National Service

Whereas it has been discovered that many otherwise deserving men are unobtainable for national service because of their reluctance to accept remuneration for service, the Congress places on record its opinion that there is not only nothing derogatory to one's dignity in accepting remuneration for national service, but the Congress hopes that patriotic young men and women will regard it as an honour to accept maintenance for service faithfully rendered and that those needing or those willing to do service will prefer national to any other service.

Resolution XII: Changes in the Constitution

In Article XI "Rs. 10" to be altered to "Re. 1".

In Article XXIII, add, after the first sentence ending with the word "Congress":

"The treasurers shall be in charge of the funds of the Congress and shall keep proper accounts of them. The general secretaries shall be in charge of the Office of the All-India Congress Committee and shall be responsible for the publication of the report of the proceedings of the preceding session of the Congress and of any special session held in the course of the year, in co-operation with the Reception Committee. Such report shall be published as soon as possible and not later than four months after the session, and shall be offered for sale."

Add at the end of article XXIII: "and published along with the next Congress report."

Resolution XIII: Drink and Opium Traffic

The Congress notes with satisfaction that notwithstanding the set back suffered by the campaign against the use of intoxicating drinks and drugs initiated in 1921, Congress workers in several parts of the country have continued it with vigour and determination. The Congress hopes that the peaceful endeavours of workers to wean those who are addicted to the drink or the opium habit from the

curse will receive further and greater strength and encouragement than hitherto.

The Congress is of opinion that the policy of the Government of India in using the drink and drug habit of the people as a source of revenue is detrimental to the moral welfare of the people of India and would therefore welcome its abolition.

The Congress is further of opinion that the regulation by the Government of India of the opium traffic is detrimental not only to the moral welfare of India but of the whole world, and that the cultivation of opium in India which is out of all proportion to medical and scientific requirements should be restricted to such requirements.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 115-6 & 118

394. SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON OFFICE-BEARERS,[1] BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

There are now only two things remaining—things that we always have to do, namely, the election of general secretaries and a treasurer and deciding on the venue for the next Congress. It will be desirable to leave this to the All-India Congress Committee, as was done last year. The treasurer is the same. The general secretaries will be: first, Pandit Jawaharlal; second, Qureshi; and third, Mr. Bharucha. Previously Dr. Kitchlew was there and Babu Rajendra Prasad was approached. Babu Rajendra Prasad has to attend to many kinds of activities and he cannot give all his time to our work. So the question of two new secretaries has come up. There was a great deal of discussion in the Subjects Committee on the matter yesterday and I had talks with the delegates. It was decided in the end that since I shall be the President of the Congress for this year and the next year, secretaries should be appointed from among the people who can help me in my work. A number of Swarajists and No-changers are there. How would it be to take them into the Working Committee? I also liked the idea—and I am willing to take into the Working Committee not one but all of them, but on one condition, namely, that they understand it clearly that there is only one national programme, that removal of untouchability, charkha, prohibition form one single

[1] The resolution was later put to vote and carried.

programme. I had said that if there be any Swarajist as staunchly believing in khadi as I do I should like to take him, for through him I should reform all the Swarajists. The moment they come and work with me we become united, that is if we wish to unite.

Thus the discussion went on. No one came in view.

The two persons suggested are not necessarily No-changers. I know a little bit about them which I should like to tell you. I know Shwaib Qureshi. He is an orthodox Muslim. But I have not taken him because of that. I want to take full-time work from secretaries. I therefore told Maulana Shaukat Ali that if Shwaib Sahib would be willing to give me all his time I would like to have him. He agreed. He is the kind of man who once he makes a promise carries out that promise. He has a love for khadi, this also I know.

Bharucha is a crank. I am a crank too. So we shall get on splendidly. I shall have to learn from him to carry bundles of khadi on my shoulder and go hawking. He has become a specialist in this. It is his wish to see khadi reach every part of the country. Not one but hundreds of Bharuchas are required thus to sell khadi. Bharucha went to Lala Harkishen Lal, he went to others, and gave them khadi. Even if people swear at him he does not mind it. The secretaries we need today should be such that they will sell khadi even if they are abused. They should be able to put up with any kind of insult for the sake of khadi. I have therefore selected these two. But though I have done my selection the final say is yours. The Subjects Committee has of course agreed. But the constitution of the Congress requires that you express your opinion. Those of you who accept these names should come out with their opinion. About the treasurer nothing needs to be said. You say if you like the man.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 116-7

395. SPEECH ANNOUNCING RESULTS OF SPINNING COMPETITION, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

Now there is something I am going to say to you. There is something to be announced. You know there has been a spinning competition. Some friends gave gold medals to be awarded, some silver medals. In all, eleven such medals have been awarded. I am going to explain to you who gave these eleven medals and to whom they have been awarded. Mr. Satyanarayan Sinha from Bihar has been awarded a first-class medal. Six medals were given by Gangaji who is from Sydney. Mr. Satyanarayan Sinha spun 765 yards of yarn in an hour. It is a matter of great credit.

The second medal went to Andhra. Koru Kandhawekamba got it. The third also went to an Andhra man, Mr. Srinivasachari. The fourth went to Madhu Gulabi Amba of Tamilnad and the sixth[1] to Minakshi Sundaram. The seventh to Mrs. Taramati Arunnisa, the eighth to Ramakrishna Sastri, the ninth to Ramdev Thakur, the tenth to Subhan Ali and the eleventh to Lakshmibai Anta of Andhra.

I am sorry to see that only one Muslim brother has secured a medal. There was a time when Muslim women spun the finest yarn. But we also notice that out of eleven medals four have gone to our sisters and the rest to our brothers. A friend writes to say that he wants to shake hands with the untouchable brother who spoke here. He is a delegate from Delhi. He may have the meeting he desires. The students' meeting will be at 8 o'clock and the All-India Congress Committee will meet at 11 o'clock. It has been suggested that among the departed leaders Maulana Sir Sahib should also be mentioned. I asked Maulana Mahomed Ali. It seems he did not die so recently. He died on the eve of the Cocanada Congress—just a day earlier. It is the duty of all present to mourn for him. And now we are through.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, p. 118

[1] The fifth name is missing in the source.

396. CONCLUDING SPEECH AT BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

In bringing the proceedings of the session to a close the President delivered a most impassioned address, first in Hindi and then in English . . . .

BROTHERS,

I now wish to tell you that whatever gratitude I may feel for you will be wholly inadequate. I do not think any president can expect a greater amount of love than you have shown me. You willingly did all the work that I wanted you to do for me. When I bid you observe silence, you observed silence. You listened to any speech I wanted to make. You wanted me to deliver a written oration. When I wanted to be excused you did not press. And just as you expressed your opinions here quietly, without being noisy, in the Subjects Committee also there was no disturbance. In fact there might have been disturbance when the bomb of the charkha was dropped in your midst, but you raised no objection and in the Subjects Committee also behaved with perfect decorum. I feel this kindness of my brethren to me must be the result of some good deed I may have done in an earlier life. It is my wish that the kindness you have shown towards me you should show towards India, for if I wish to live it is only for India and if I wish to die it is also only for India. Not a leaf stirs without God's will. But every man has a right to ask of God just as a child asks of his father what he wants. I have seen that He even grants what I ask Him. What God has willed cannot be otherwise.

I therefore appeal to you, brothers, to gird up your loins for the service of India and stick to the pledge you have taken. I know I took the chair here as President and all of you gave me your love. I desire, naturally, that everyone should praise me, but it does not lead to any achievement. The achievement will come when all of you act as you have pledged. I do not believe that all these tasks are beyond our strength—the third task or the fourth or fifth—none of them.

Listening to the speech of Bhopatkar gave me a pleasant surprise. He demanded if we wanted the destruction of Hinduism that we treat men as untouchables. I was very pleased. And three shastris have just told you that there is no sanction in Hinduism for untouchability as it is practised. Is it the same thing as when

we say that Hindus and Muslims should not treat one another as enemies but as brothers? Did you not hear what Shaukat Ali said? What did Lajpat Rai say? Zafar Ali Khan raised an objection. I do not see anything to object to, but he is not an enemy of India. You should treat no one as enemy. The urge in your heart should be to make a brother of an enemy.

Lalaji has invoked a principle, namely, that the question is of the human species as a whole. It is not confined to any particular religion. He said if a Hindu became mad should not a Mussalman swear at him? If Mussalmans abused Ramachandra and Krishna should not Hindus abuse the Prophet? If you cannot decide this matter by forgiving, go to a court or a panchayat. I am a non-co-operator, but if a Mussalman abuses Lord Krishna I will say, "Go to a court, but do not fight. There is nothing in this to fight over." It does not require much time to accept this principle. There should be a fever in us for swaraj, our hearts should burn for it. When Bhopatkar was speaking I thought of Lokamanya. He was the genius of swaraj. A remarkable thing I heard about him is that when his wife lay dying he was busy in his work for swaraj. If such volcanoes are created in our hearts we can do the third thing, the fourth thing and everything else. That you should wear khadi when you come to Congress is nothing big. That we should give up wearing foreign cloth is nothing big. Today I do not talk about burning foreign cloth. I am today not the man who in 1921 had caused foreign cloth to be burnt. But we have left peaceful ways. If even today we can bring about complete peace I can again take up what we did in 1921. Under the pretext of burning foreign cloth we heaped stones to throw at people.

I know we cannot simultaneously do both: invoke truth and practise untruth. If we invoke truth we must not practise untruth, or our bodies will burn up. It burns my heart certainly. I cannot bear it if someone falsely swears by God or takes false pledges. Abuse me by all means, beat me, kick me with shoes, spit at me, I give you my word that I shall not get angry. But take a pledge and not act on it and anger will burn away my whole body. I should wish to die if a woman who is unchaste should parade her chastity in front of me. I should wish to die, again, if a man who is impure should parade his purity in front of me. I would not wish to witness it. If you want that the love you have shown me, the kindness you have done me in placing the mantle of responsibility on me, should continue, you should understand this well; keep me in this position if you want to. But it will be even better if the Swarajists and No-changers should walk in unison. As Dr. Besant

said, one single stick, by itself, easily breaks, but in a bundle it is very strong.

Let us not think that the Swarajists are bad people. To a pure heart all hearts are pure. What are the qualities of the soul? The soul is like marble. Shankaracharya has said that blemishes are not native to it. Blemishes are *maya*[1]. If your heart acquires strength you will be able to remove blemishes from others without thinking evil of them. If treachery is the reward of trust, will the man who trusts come to harm? Only the one who commits treachery will come to harm. If I say to Jawaharlal that he is more than a son to me and if I say it only to take some work from him, it is deception. Who am I to venerate Jawaharlal? The world will venerate him, shower flowers on him.

Today I have to say—not to the one alone or the other alone but to both: During this one year work so hard that our strength should be increased and we should be able to feel that swaraj is at last within our reach.

Addressing next in English the President said:

I have just poured out my heart to you in my Hindi speech. It is impossible for me to reproduce what I have said in Hindi. One thing however I want to say. I do not think that any chairman, any president, could possibly claim greater courtesy, greater attention and greater affection than you the delegates have extended to me. I assure you that it has been the greatest delight to me to preside over your deliberations here in the Congress and in the Subjects Committee. Every one of you have readily responded to every call that I have made upon you. I know that I have put a heavy strain upon you. I have not walked you. I know I have run you. But what can I do? You are impatient and I am impatient. We want to march towards swaraj and our march for swaraj has got to be, not at a snail's pace, but a double quick march; and if we do want to work and march forward, I cannot afford to waste a single minute of your time and my time. Therefore, I have put on speed to the best of my ability and it has been a wonder to me—it has given to me the greatest satisfaction that you have so readily responded to me, so nobly! And you have not done this thing charily but with a magnificent generosity. No one could have possibly claimed more, asked for more, and got more. You have given me all that I could possibly ask of you.

But what I now want to ask you for, is something more, something better, something richer, and that is this: Transfer all

[1] Cosmic illusion

this noble affection, all this generosity that you have shown to me to the thing that you and I hold dear, to the thing that alone binds you and me together and that is swaraj. If we want swaraj, we must know the conditions of swaraj. You have endorsed the conditions in the resolutions. Every one of you knows those conditions. Do not leave these conditions here. Take them away with you and fulfil them to the letter and to the spirit and insist upon others to fulfil those conditions, not by force but by love. Exert all the influence and all the pressure which love can exert, upon everyone that surrounds you and upon your neighbours. Go throughout your district and spread this message of khaddar, spread this message of Hindu-Muslim unity and spread this message against[1] untouchability. Go hand in hand with the youngsters of the country and make them the real soldiers of swaraj.

But you will not do it if the Swarajists and No-changers still bear malice against each other, if they still have jealousies against one another. It will be possible only if you bury hatred, leave all the jealousies and anger, all those bad influences here. I ask you to bury the hatchet. Bury the jealousies underground and cremate them wherever you like. But take away the sacred resolution that you have passed and say, "Let the heavens fall, but the bond that binds us today, the tie that has bound the Swarajists and the No-changers, shall never snap." My work is finished.

Scarcely had the President got down the rostrum when he was reminded of the duty of the Congress to thank the Reception Committee, and he re-entered the rostrum and said:

I would not have forgiven myself if I had not tendered my thanks to the noble volunteers trained by Dr. Hardikar and to the members of the Reception Committee. But in the mad passion for swaraj I forgot all about the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee.

I know that they have not served in order to receive thanks. The noble service that they have rendered is its own reward. But it was due from me and I would have been guilty of a breach of duty to you if I had not returned thanks to all of you. May God bless all the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 119-22

[1] The source has "of".

397. *SPEECH AT UNTOUCHABILITY CONFERENCE, BELGAUM*

[*December 27, 1924*]

The following is a free rendering of Mr. Gandhi's speech at the Untouchability Conference held at Belgaum during the Congress week:

FRIENDS,

It was hardly necessary to ask me to express my views on the subject of untouchability. I have declared times without number from various public platforms that it is the prayer of my heart that if I should fail to obtain *moksha* in this very birth I might be born a *Bhangi* in my next. I believe in *varnashrama* both according to birth and to karma. But I do not regard *Bhangis* as in any sense a low order. On the contrary I know many *Bhangis* who are worthy of reverence. On the other hand there are Brahmins going about whom it would be very difficult to regard with any reverence. Holding these views, therefore, if there is a rebirth in store for me, I wish to be born a pariah in the midst of pariahs, because thereby I would be able to render more effective service to them and also be in a better position to plead with other communities on their behalf.

But just as I do not want the so-called touchables to despise the untouchables, so also I do not want the latter to entertain any feeling of hatred and ill will towards the former. I do not want them to wrest their rights by violence as is done in the West. The trend of world opinion is against such violence. I can clearly see a time coming in the world when it will be impossible to secure rights by arbitrament of force, so I tell my untouchable brethren today as I tell the Government, that if they resort to force for the attainment of their purpose they shall certainly fail.

I want to uplift Hinduism. I regard the untouchables as an integral part of the Hindu community. I am pained when I see a single *Bhangi* driven out of the fold of Hinduism. But do not believe that all class distinctions can be obliterated. I believe in the doctrine of equality as taught by Lord Krishna in the *Gita*. The *Gita* teaches us that members of all the four castes should be treated on an equal basis. It does not prescribe the same dharma for the Brahmin as for the *Bhangi*. But it insists that the latter shall be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the former with all his superior learning. It is therefore

our duty to see that the untouchables do not feel that they are despised or looked down upon. Let them not be offered leavings from our plates for their subsistence. How can I accord differential treatment to any person, be he Brahmin or *Bhangi*, who worships the same God and keeps his body and soul pure and clean? I for one would regard myself as having sinned if I gave to a *Bhangi* unclean food from the leavings from the kitchen or failed to render him personal assistance when he was in need.

Let me make my position absolutely clear. While I do hold that the institution of untouchability as it stands today has no sanction in Hinduism, Hinduism does recognize "untouchability" in a limited sense and under certain circumstances. For instance, every time that my mother handled unclean things she became untouchable for the time being and had to cleanse herself by bathing. As a *Vaishnava* I refuse to believe that anyone can be regarded untouchable by reason of his or her birth, and such untouchability as is recognized by religion is by its very nature transitory, easily removable and referable to the deed not the doer. Not only that. Just as we revere our mother for the sanitary service that she renders us when we are infants, and the greater her service the greater is our reverence for her, similary the *Bhangis* are entitled to our highest reverence for the sanitary service they perform for society.

Now another point. I do not regard inter-dining and intermarriage as essential to the removal of untouchability. I believe in *varnashrama* dharma. But I eat with *Bhangis*. I do not know whether I am a sannyasi, for I seriously doubt whether in this *Kaliyuga* it is at all possible for anyone to fulfil the conditions prescribed for a sannyasi. But I am moving deliberately in the direction of *sannyasa*. It is, therefore, not only not necessary for me to observe these restrictions but their observance may be even harmful for me. As regards the question of intermarriage, it does not arise in cases like mine. Sufficient for me to say that my scheme does not include intermarriage. Let me tell you that in my own clan all the members do not inter-dine. In certain cases among our *Vaishnava* families they do not use each other's utensils or even cook food on fire fetched from others' kitchens. You may call this practice superstitious, but I do not regard it as such. It certainly does no harm to Hinduism. In my Ashram, Dudhabhai, one of the untouchable inmates, dines with the rest without any distinction. But I do not recommend anybody outside the Ashram to follow this example. Again, you know the esteem in which I hold Malaviyaji. I would wash his

feet. But he would not take food touched by me. Am I to resent it as a mark of contempt? Certainly not, because I know that no contempt is meant.

The religion to which I belong prescribes for our observance *maryada*[1] *dharma*. The *rishis* of old carried on exhaustive researches through meditation, and as a result of the researches they discovered some great truths, such as have no parallel perhaps in any other religion. One of these was that they regarded certain kinds of foods as injurious for the spiritual well-being of man. So they interdicted their use. Now suppose someone had to travel abroad and live among strange people with different customs and standards as regard their diet. Knowing as they did how compelling sometimes the force of social customs of the people among whom men lived was, they promulgated *maryada dharma* to help one in such emergencies. Though, however, I believe in *maryada dharma*, I do not regard it as an essential part of Hinduism. I can even conceive a time when these restrictions might be abolished with impunity. But the reform contemplated in the untouchability movement does not obliterate the restriction as to inter-dining and intermarriage. I cannot recommend wholesale abolition of these restrictions to the public, even at the risk of being charged with hypocrisy and inconsistency. For instance, I let my son dine freely in Mussalman households because I believe he can take sufficient care as to what to take and what not to take. I myself have no scruples in taking my food in Mussalman households because I have my own strict rules about my diet. Let me tell you of an incident that happened at Aligarh. Swami Satyadev and I were Khwaja Sahib's guests. Swami Satyadev did not share my views. We argued about them. I told him that holding the views I did, it would be as wrong of me to refuse to partake of the food offered by a Mussalman as it would be on his part to transgress his *maryada*. So Swami Satyadev was provided with separate cooking arrangements. Similarly when I was Bari Sahib's guest he provided us with a Brahmin cook with strict instructions to obtain all the rations for us fresh from the bazaar. When asked why he put himself to such inconvenience he explained that he did so because he wanted to avoid the slightest possibility of suspicion on the part of the public that he entertained any secret designs of proselytization against me or my companions. That single incident raised Bari Sahib in my esteem. He sometimes commits mistakes, but he is as simple and innocent as a child.

[1] Bounds or limits

And although sometimes people complain of him to me bitterly, my first impression of him still remains.

I have dwelt on this point at such great length, because I want to be absolutely plain with you (untouchables). I do not want to employ diplomacy in my dealings with you or for that matter with anyone. I do not want to keep you under any false illusion or win your support by holding out temptations. I want to remove untouchability because its removal is essential for swaraj and I want swaraj. But I would not exploit you for gaining any political ends of mine. The issue with me is bigger even than swaraj. I am anxious to see an end put to untouchability because for me it is an expiation and a penance. It is not the untouchables whose *shuddhi* I effect—the thing would be absurd —but my own and that of the Hindu religion. Hinduism has committed a great sin in giving sanction to this evil and I am anxious—if such a thing as vicarious penance is possible—to purify it of that sin by expiating for it in my own person.

That being so, it follows that the only means open to me for my purpose are those of ahimsa and truth. I have adopted an untouchable child as my own. I confess I have not been able to convert my wife completely to my view. She cannot bring herself to love her as I do. But I cannot convert my wife by anger; I can do so only by love. If any of my people have done you any wrong, I ask your forgiveness for it. Some members of the untouchable class said when I was at Poona that they would resort to force if the Hindus did not alter their attitude towards them. Can untouchability be removed by force? Can the amelioration of the untouchables come through these methods? The only way by which you and I can wean orthodox Hindus from their bigotry is by patient argument and correct conduct. So long as they are not converted, I can only ask you to put up with your lot with patience. I am willing to stand by you and share your sufferings with you. You must have the right of worship in any temple in which members of other castes are admitted. You must have admission to schools along with the children of other castes without any distinction. You must be eligible to the highest office in the land not excluding even that of the Viceroy's. That is my definition of the removal of untouchability.

But I can help you in this only by following the way indicated by my religion and not by following Western methods. For that way I cannot save Hinduism. Yours is a sacred cause. Can one serve a sacred cause by adopting Satan's methods? I pray you, therefore, to dismiss from your mind the idea of ame-

liorating your condition by brute force. The *Gita* tells us that by sincerely meditating on the Lord in one's heart, one can attain *moksha*. Meditation is waiting on God. If waiting on God brings the highest bliss of salvation, how much quicker must it bring removal of untouchability? Waiting on God means increasing purity. Let us by prayer purify ourselves and we shall not only remove untouchability but shall also hasten the advent of swaraj.

Young India, 22-1-1925

398. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT COW-PROTECTION CONFERENCE, BELGAUM

[*December 28, 1924*]

The following is the substance of Mr. Gandhi's presidential speech at the Cow Conference held during the Congress week at Belgaum:

I hold the question of cow-protection to be not less momentous but in certain respects even of far greater moment than that of swaraj. I would even go so far as to say that just as so long as Hindu-Muslim unity is not effected, Hinduism not purged of the taint of untouchability and the wearing of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar does not become universal, swaraj would be impossible of attainment; even so, the term "swaraj" would be devoid of all meaning so long as we have not found out a way of saving the cow, for that is the touchstone on which Hinduism must be tested and proved before there can be any real swaraj in India. I claim to be a *sanatani* Hindu. People may laugh and say that to call myself a *sanatani* Hindu when I eat and drink from the hands of Mussalmans and Christians, keep an untouchable girl in my house as my daughter and do not even hesitate to quote the Bible, is nothing short of doing violence to language. But I would still adhere to my claim, for I have faith in me which tells me that a day would come—may be most probably after I am dead and no longer present in this world in the flesh to bear witness—when my critics would recognize their error and admit the justness of my claim. Pretty long while ago, I once wrote in *Young India* an article on Hinduism,[1] which I consider to be one of my most thoughtful writings on the subject. The definition of Hinduism which I gave in it is probably the

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 245-50.

clearest that I have ever given. After defining a Hindu as one who believed in the Vedas and Upanishads, recited the *Gayatri* and subscribed to the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration, etc., I added that so far as the popular notion of Hinduism was concerned, its distinguishing feature was belief in cow-protection and reverence for the cow. I do not want to be told as to what Hindus ten thousand years ago did. I know there are scholars who tell us that cow-sacrifice is mentioned in the Vedas. I remember when I was a high school student we read a sentence in our Sanskrit text-book to the effect that the Brahmins of old used to eat beef. That exercised my mind greatly and I used to wonder and ask myself whether what was written could be after all true. But as I grew up the conviction slowly forced itself upon me that even if the text on which these statements were based was actually part of the Vedas, the interpretation put upon it could not be correct. I had conceived of another way out of the difficulty. This was purely for personal satisfaction. "If the Vedic text under reference was incapable of bearing any other interpretation than the literal", I said to myself, "the Brahmins who were alleged to be eating beef had the power to bring the slaughtered animals back to life again." But that is neither here nor there. The speculation does not concern the general mass of the Hindus. I do not claim to be a Vedic scholar. I have read Sanskrit scriptures largely in translation. A layman like myself, therefore, can hardly have any *locus standi* in a controversy like this. But I have confidence in myself. Therefore I do not hesitate to freely express to others my opinions based on my inner experience. It may be that we may not be all able to agree as to the exact meaning and significance of cow-protection. For Hinduism does not rest on the authority of one book or one prophet; nor does it possess a common creed—like the *Kalma*[1]. of Islam—acceptable to all. That renders a common definition of Hinduism a bit difficult, but therein lies its strength also. For, it is this special feature that has given to Hinduism its inclusive and assimilative character and made its gradual, silent evolution possible. Go to any Hindu child and he would tell you that cow-protection is the supreme duty of every Hindu and that anyone who does not believe in it hardly deserves the name of a Hindu.

But while I am a firm believer in the necessity and importance of cow-protection, I do not at all endorse the current methods

[1] The creed of Islam as expressed in the verse from The Koran: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His apostle."

adopted for that purpose. Some of the practices followed in the name of cow-protection cause me extreme anguish. My heart aches within me. Several years ago I wrote in *Hind Swaraj* that our cow-protection societies were in fact so many cow-killing societies.[1] Since then and after my return to India in 1915, that conviction of mine has grown stronger and firmer every day. Holding the views that I do, therefore, I have naturally felt a great hesitation in accepting the Presidentship of this Conference. Would it be proper for me to preside over this Conference under these circumstances? Would I at all succeed in convincing you of the soundness of my views—radically different as they are from the commonly accepted notions on this subject? These were the questions that filled my mind. But Mr. Gangadharrao Deshpande wired to me that I might preside over the Conference on my terms, that Sjt. Chikodi was familiar with my views on the matter and was at one with me to a very large extent. So much by way of personal explanation.

Once, while in Champaran, I was asked to expound my views regarding cow-protection. I told my Champaran friends then that if anybody was really anxious to save the cow, he ought once for all to disabuse his mind of the notion that he had to make the Christians and Mussalmans to desist from cow-killing. Unfortunately today we seem to believe that the problem of cow-protection consists merely in preventing non-Hindus, especially Mussalmans, from beef-eating and cow-killing. That seems to me to be absurd. Let no one, however, conclude from this that I am indifferent when a non-Hindu kills a cow or that I can bear the practice of cow-killing. On the contrary, no one probably experiences a greater agony of the soul when a cow is killed. But what am I to do? Am I to fulfil my dharma myself or am I to get it fulfilled by proxy? Of what avail would be my preaching *brahmacharya* to others if I am at the same time steeped in vice myself? How can I ask Mussalmans to desist from eating beef when I eat it myself? But supposing even that I myself do not kill the cow, is it any part of my duty to make the Mussalman, against his will, to do likewise? Mussalmans claim that Islam permits them to kill the cow. To make a Mussalman, therefore, to abstain from cow-killing under compulsion would amount in my opinion to converting him to Hinduism by force. Even in India under swaraj, in my opinion, it would be for a Hindu majority unwise and improper to coerce by legislation a Mussalman

[1] *Vide* Vol. X, p. 30.

minority into submission to statutory prohibition of cow-slaughter. When I pledge myself to save the cow, I do not mean merely the Indian cow, but the cow all the world over. My religion teaches me that I should by my personal conduct instil into the minds of those who might hold different views, the conviction that cow-killing is a sin and that therefore it ought to be abandoned. My ambition is no less than to see the principle of cow-protection established throughout the world. But that requires that I should set my own house thoroughly in order first.

Let alone other provinces. Would you believe me if I told you that the Hindus of Gujarat practice cow-killing? You will wonder but let me tell you that in Gujarat the bullocks employed for drawing carts are goaded with spiked rods till blood oozes from their bruised backs. You may say that this is not cow-killing but bullock-killing. But I see no difference between the two, the killing of the cow and killing her male progeny. Again you may say that this practice may be abominable and worthy of condemnation but it hardly amounts to killing. But here, again, I beg to differ. If the bullock in question had a tongue to speak and were asked which fate he preferred—instantaneous death under the butcher's knife or the long-drawn agony to which he is subjected, he would undoubtedly prefer the former. At Calcutta a Sindhi gentleman used to meet me often. He used always to tell me stories about the cruelty that was practised by milk-men on cows in Calcutta. He asked me to see for myself the process of milking the cows as carried on in the dairies. The practice of blowing is loathsome. The people who do this are Hindus. Again, nowhere in the world is the condition of cattle so poor as in India. Nowhere in the world would you find such skeletons of cows and bullocks as you do in our cow-worshipping India. Nowhere are bullocks worked so beyond their capacity as here. I contend that so long as these things continue we have no right to ask anybody to stop cow-killing. In *Bhagavata* in one place the illustrious author describes the various things which have been the cause of India's downfall. One of the causes mentioned is that we have given up cow-protection. Today I want to bring home to you if I can the close relation which exists between the present poverty-stricken condition of India and our failure to protect the cow. We, who live in cities, probably can have no idea of the extent of the poverty of our poor folk. Millions upon millions cannot afford to have two full meals per day. Some live on rotten rice only. There are others for whom salt and chillies are the only table luxuries. Is it not a just nemesis for our belying of our religion?

Then in India we have the system of *pinjrapoles*[1]. The way in which most of these are managed is far from satisfactory. And yet, I am sorry to observe that the people who are mostly responsible for them are Jains, who are out and out believers in ahimsa. Well organized, these *pinjrapoles* ought to be flourishing dairies supplying pure good milk at a cheap rate to the poor. I am told however that even in a rich city like Ahmedabad there are cases of the wives of labourers feeding their babies on flour dissolved in water. There cannot be a sadder commentary on the way in which we protect the cow than that in a country which has such an extensive system of *pinjrapoles* the poor should experience a famine of pure, good milk. That I hope will serve to explain to you how our failure to protect the cow at one end of the chain results in our skin and bone starvelings at the other.

If, therefore, I am asked how to save the cow, my first advice will be: "Dismiss from your minds the Mussalmans and Christians altogether and mind your own duty first." I have been telling Maulana Shaukat Ali all along that I was helping him to save his cow, i.e., the Khilafat, because I hoped to save my cow thereby. I am prepared to place my life in the hands of the Mussalmans, to live merely on their sufferance. Why? Simply that I might be able to protect the cow. I hope to achieve the end not by entering into a bargain with the Mussalmans but by bringing about a change of heart in them. So long as this is not done I hold my soul in patience. For I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that such a change of heart can be brought about only by our own correct conduct towards them and by our personal example.

Cow-slaughter and man-slaughter are in my opinion the two sides of the same coin. And the remedy for both is identical, i.e., that we develop the ahimsa principle and endeavour to win over our opponents by love. The test of love is *tapasya* and *tapasya* means suffering. I offered to share with the Mussalmans their suffering to the best of my capacity not merely because I wanted their co-operation for winning swaraj but also because I had in mind the object of saving the cow. The Koran, so far as I have been able to understand it, declares it to be a sin to take the life of any living being without cause. I want to develop the capacity to convince the Mussalmans that to kill the cow is practically to kill their fellow-countrymen and friends—the Hindus. The Koran says that there can be no heaven for one who sheds the blood of

[1] Shelters for crippled and aged cattle

an innocent neighbour. Therefore I am anxious to establish the best neighbourly relations with the Mussalmans. I scrupulously avoid doing anything that might hurt their feelings. I even try to respect their prejudices. But I do this not in a spirit of bargain, I ask them for no reward. For that I look to God only. My *Gita* tells me that evil can never result from a good action. Therefore I must help the Mussalmans from a pure sense of duty—without making any terms with them. For more cows are killed today for the sake of Englishmen in India than for the Mussalmans. I want to convert the former also. I would like to convince them that whilst they are in our midst their duty lies in getting rid of their Western culture to the extent that it comes in conflict with ours. You will thus see that even our self-interest requires us to observe ahimsa. By ahimsa we will be able to save the cow and also to win the friendship of the English. I want to purchase the friendship of all by sacrifice. But if I do not approach the English on bent knees, as I do the Mussalmans, that is because the former are intoxicated with power. The Mussalman is a fellow-sufferer in slavery. We can therefore speak to him as a friend and a comrade. The Englishman on the contrary is unable to appreciate our friendly advances. He would spurn them. He does not care for our friendship, he wants to patronize us. We want neither his insults nor his patronage. We therefore let him alone. Our Shastras have laid down that charity should be given only to a deserving person, that knowledge should be imparted only to one who is desirous of having it. So we content ourselves with non-co-operating with our rulers—not out of hatred but in a spirit of love. It was because love was the motive force behind non-co-operation that I advised suspension of civil disobedience when violence broke out in Bombay and Chauri Chaura. I wanted to make it clear to Englishmen that I wanted to win swaraj not by shedding their blood but by making them feel absolutely at ease as regards the safety of their persons. What profit would it be if I succeed in saving a few cows from death by using force against persons who do not regard cow-killing as sinful? Cow-protection then can only be secured by cultivating universal friendliness, i.e., ahimsa. Now you will understand why I regard the question of cow-protection as greater even than that of swaraj. The fact is that the capacity to achieve the former will suffice for the latter purpose as well.

So far I have confined myself to the grosser or material aspect of cow-protection, i.e., the aspect that refers to the animal cow only. In its finer or spiritual sense the term cow-protection means

the protection of every living creature. Today the world does not fully realize the force and possibilities that lie hidden in ahimsa. The scriptures of Christians, Mussalmans and Hindus are all replete with the teaching of ahimsa. But we do not know its full import. The *rishis* of old performed terrible penances and austerities to discover the right meaning of sacred texts. Today we have at least two interpretations of the *Gayatri*. Which one of them is correct, that of the *sanatanis* or that of the Arya Samajists? Who can say? But our *rishis* made the startling discovery (and every day I feel more and more convinced of its truth) that sacred texts and inspired writings yield their truth only in proportion as one has advanced in the practice of ahimsa and truth. The greater the realization of truth and ahimsa the greater the illumination. These same *rishis* declared that cow-protection was the supreme duty of a Hindu and that its performance brought one *moksha*, i.e., salvation. Now I am not ready to believe that by merely protecting the animal cow, one can attain *moksha*. For *moksha* one must completely get rid of one's lower feelings like attachment, hatred, anger, jealousy, etc. It follows, therefore, that the meaning of cow-protection in terms of *moksha* must be much wider and far more comprehensive than is commonly supposed. The cow-protection which can bring one *moksha* must, from its very nature, include the protection of everything that feels. Therefore in my opinion, every little breach of the ahimsa principle, like causing hurt by harsh speech to anyone, man, woman or child, to cause pain to the weakest and the most insignificant creature on earth would be a breach of the principle of cow-protection, would be tantamount to the sin of beef-eating—differing from it in degree, if at all, rather than in kind. That being so, I hold that with all our passions let loose we cannot today claim to be following the principle of cow-protection.

At Lahore I met Lala Dhanpatrai, somewhat of a crank like myself. He told me that if I wanted to save the cow I should wean the Hindus from their false notions. He said it was Hindus who sold cows to the Mussalman butcher and but for them the latter would have no cows to kill. The reason for this practice he told me was economical. The village commons that served as grazing grounds for the cattle had been enclosed by the Government and so people could not afford to keep cows. He suggested a way out of the difficulty. It was no longer necessary, he told me, to sell cows that had ceased to give milk. He himself, he said, had tried the experiment of buying such cows. He then put them to the plough. After some time, if proper care was taken,

they put on flesh and became fit to bear again. I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement. But I see no reason why this practice should not be generally adopted if the facts are as stated by Lala Dhanpatrai. Our Shastras certainly have nowhere said that under no circumstances should the cow not be used for draught purposes. If we feed the cow properly, tend it carefully and then use her for drawing carts or working the plough, always taking care not to tax her beyond her capacity, there can be nothing wrong in it. I therefore commend the suggestion for consideration and adoption if it is found to be workable. We may not look down upon a person if he tries to protect the cow in this manner.

Young India, 29-1-1925

399. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA STATES CONFERENCE, BELGAUM[1]

[*December 30, 1924*]

I am overwhelmed with the affection which is shown to me by all during the past few days. Today the president of your Conference in adjourning the address to give me an opportunity to speak a few words to you has given further proof of it. You may know that I was born in an Indian village. I know Kathiawar States. My relations with them are cordial. Though I say little I am always watching the activities in the Indian States. In my Presidential Address I have made a reference to the Indian States. The All Parties Conference that met recently in Bombay has appointed a committee to draft a scheme of swaraj and in my address I have outlined my ideas of the coming swaraj. I had to condense my ideas in the shortest space possible and so I could give very few sentences to the Indian States. There are some *vakil* friends of mine who have something to say about this reference of mine to the Indian States. They are saying that I have spoken about the status of Indian princes and chiefs and nothing about their obligations towards their subjects. But I need not remind these friends of mine that rights always carry with them corresponding obligations. In my scheme of Indian swaraj there is no idea of destroying the States. I wanted to bring out this

[1] Presided over by N. C. Kelkar. As Gandhiji had to leave immediately, the president requested him to say a few words.

view prominently before the public. If, however, subjects from Indian States migrated to British Indian territory owing to the oppression of any Indian Prince, the swaraj government will on no account hand over these people to the mercies of the Prince concerned. This guarantee to the subject and the guarantee to the Princes about their status postulate good government in the Indian States.

In geometry there are certain postulates. So also there are some in the political science. When the Princes are guaranteed their status it is presumed that they will also guarantee progressive and enlightened government to their subjects. I am shortly to preside over the Kathiawar States Conference at Bhavnagar and I have reserved all my detailed say about the Indian States for this occasion. I was invited to preside over this Conference long ago. But before my incarceration I had unfurled the banner of satyagraha and I thought that my acceptance of the presidentship of any of these conferences might jeopardize the position of the Chiefs. I did not wish to put them in an awkward position and thus to mar the harmonious relations which existed between them and me. You know that I am an out-and-out believer in non-violence. To embitter the sweet relations between Princes and their subjects would be contrary to my principles. But I need not assure you that I can never forget the people of these States and their legitimate claims. My desire is to maintain sweet reasonableness in my handling the question of Indian States and I do not wish to prejudice any party. My sole desire is that the status of Princes and the rights of their subjects should be respected. I earnestly wish to enlist the sympathies of the Princes in this propaganda of khadi and the charkha. I have pinned my faith to the spinning-wheel. On it I believe the salvation of this country depends.

After the Mahatma left, Mr. Kelkar gave a summary of his speech in Marathi . . .

The Bombay Chronicle, 2-1-1925

400. LETTER TO MADELEINE SLADE

ON THE TRAIN,
December 31, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I must apologize to you for not writing to you earlier. I have been continuously travelling. I thank you for £20 sent by you. The amount will be used for popularizing the spinning-wheel.

I am glad indeed that instead of obeying your first impulse you decided to fit yourself for the life here and to take time. If a year's test still impels you to come, you will probably be right in coming to India.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MISS MADELEINE SLADE
63, BEDFORD GARDENS
CAMPDEN HILL
LONDON, W. 8.

From the original: C. W. 5181. Courtesy: Mirabehn

401. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE, BOMBAY[1]

December 31, 1924

Mrs. Naidu has come from Africa and she has told you all about it. Whatever I was to say I said in the Congress. I do not know whether by asking the Government we can get help. I think as long as we have no strength we will have to bear whatever is going on in Kenya. There was a time when satyagraha was going on in South Africa and the Government was also saying that the Indians had become disloyal. At the same time Lord Hardinge made a pronouncement in Madras and that did considerable good to Indians. The reason of this was that the people in

[1] At its 16th annual session supporting the resolution condemning the Natal Boroughs Ordinance which deprived Indians of municipal franchise in Natal

South Africa were offering satyagraha. If you want to help them then you should first help yourselves.

I have painfully heard that Indians in East Africa have decided to go in Councils and have left the outside work. I do [not] know whether it is right or wrong for I cannot form a judgment from so long a distance.

The time for us now is to gather our strength and then Lord Reading you will see following the same course as Lord Hardinge. Hindu-Muslim unity is very necessary and at the same time to wear khaddar is also essential, but I do not know whether I should tell it here or not. I wish that all Government appointments should go to Mussalmans, Parsis and Christians because they are small in number; if there remains any they should be filled by Hindus.

I have come to know about the khadi work in Bengal from a co-worker, Mr. Roy (Satish Babu). There the work is chiefly carried on by Muslim women. They earn their living by charkha. So if you want to benefit them wear khadi. If you want to help Egypt and as I also have told Maulana Mahomed Ali the only course is to get swaraj first. Then and only then you can help in real sense Turkey, Egypt and Arabia. If Hindus and Muslims are united not by paper pacts and resolutions but by heart then and then only you can protect Islam in India and abroad and you please do these for one year and see the results yourselves.

The Bombay Chronicle, 1-1-1925

402. *BELGAUM IMPRESSIONS* [–*I*]

When there are too many impressions all clamouring for expression, the registrar's task becomes unenviable. Such is my position as I take up the pencil to register my impressions of Belgaum. I can but try.

Gangadharrao Deshpande and his band of workers rose to the highest height. His Vijayanagar was a triumph—not yet of swaraj—but certainly of organization. Every detail was well thought out. Dr. Hardikar's volunteers were smart and attentive. The roads were broad and well kept. They could easily be broader for the convenience of the temporary shops and the easy movement of thousands of sight-seers. The lighting arrangement was perfect. The huge pavilion with a marble fountain in front of it seemed to invite all who would enter it. The capacity of the pavilion

could not be less than seventeen thousand. The sanitary arrangements though quite good needed still more scientific treatment than what they had. The method of the disposal of used water was very primitive. I invite the Cawnpore people who are to have the honour of holding the Congress session of 1925 to study the most effective methods of camp sanitation now and not leave this very important part to the eleventh hour.

Whilst I am able to give ungrudging praise for the almost perfect organization that one could see in the Congress camp, I cannot help remarking that Gangadharrao could not escape the temptation of making the outside look lavish and in following the traditional custom of going in for extravagant luxuries for the "people at the top". Take the presidential "hut". I had bargained for a khaddar hut; but I was insulted with a khaddar palace. The floor space reserved for the President was certainly quite necessary. The fence round the "palace" was an absolute necessity for my protection from embarrassingly admiring crowds. But I am sure that, had I been contractor, I would have given the same space and the same comfort to the President at half the expense. This however is only one instance of the many I can quote of lavish expenditure. The refreshments supplied to the members of the Subjects Committee and others were unnecessarily lavish. There was no sense of proportion observed as to the quantities served. I am finding fault with nobody. The extravagance came from a generous heart. It was all well meant. Forty years' tradition cannot be undone in a day, especially if no one likely to gain a hearing will repeatedly criticize it. I know, when I suggested to Vallabhbhai in 1921 that he should make a beginning, he retorted by saying that whilst he would try to attain simplicity and avoid extravagance, he would not allow his pet Gujarat to be considered miserly. I could not presuade him that if he did not have a temporary fountain costing several thousand rupees he would not be considered miserly. I told him too that whatever he did was bound to be copied by his successors. Vallabhbhai would not take the odium of being considered miserly. I advise Cawnpore to lead the way. The miserliness of Cawnpore may be considered the extravagance of tomorrow. There were many things Vallabhbhai did discard. I did not hear any remarks about the disappearance of the things that were really not a felt want.

Let us remember that the Congress is intended to represent the poorest toilers who are the salt of India. Our scale must be so far as possible adjusted to theirs. We must therefore be progressively economical without being inefficient and stingy.

In my opinion the charges for accommodation and food are much too heavy. We may do worse than take a lesson from the book of Swami Shraddhanandji. I remember the sheds he built for his guests who came for the Gurukul anniversary in 1916. He built grass sheds for them at a cost (I think) of about Rs. 2,000. He invited contractors to open restaurants on the ground and made no charge for the accommodation. No one could complain of the arrangement. They knew what they were to expect. Nearly 40,000 people were thus accommodated on the Gurukul ground without the slightest difficulty and with practically no expense. And what is more each visitor received what he wanted and was at liberty to live cheaply or extravagantly.

I do not say that the Swami's plan should be copied in its entirety. But I do suggest that better and cheaper plans are imperatively necessary. The reduction of the delegate's fees from Rs. 10 to 1 was universally acclaimed.[1] The reduction of lodging and dining charges would be I am sure still more appreciated.

The source of income should be a small entrance fee levied from every spectator. The Congress must be an annual fair where visitors may come and get instruction with amusement. The deliberative part should be an item round which the demonstrative programme should turn. It therefore should take place in decent time, as this year, and the appointments must be religiously observed.

I am not sure that the packing of all other conferences into one week serves any national purpose. In my opinion only those conferences should take place during the Congress week that aid and strengthen the Congress. The President and his "Cabinet" must not be expected to give their attention to anything but Congress work. I know that, if there had been no other call upon my time, I could have better attended to the charge entrusted to me. I had not a moment left to me for contemplation. I was unable to frame the necessary recommendations for making the franchise a success. The fact is that the organizers of various conferences do not take their tasks seriously. They hold them because it has become the fashion to do so. I would urge workers in various directions to avoid the annual dissipation of energy.

The exhibition of indigenous arts and industries is an institution that should grow from year to year. The musical concert was a treat that thousands must have enjoyed. The lantern lectures

[1] *Vide* "Resolutions Moved from the Chair, Belgaum Congress", 27-12-1924.

tracing the tragic history of the ruin of the greatest national industry and the possibilities of its revival were apposite, instructive and amusing. I tender my congratulations to Satish Babu upon the thoughtful and thorough manner in which he organized these lectures. The spinning competition[1] must also be a permanent feature. Its popularity is evinced by the number of competitors, the brilliance of results and the number of donors. This spinning movement is bringing out women from their seclusion as nothing else could have done. Of the 11 prize winners, 4 belonged to the gentle sex. It has given them a dignity and self-confidence which no university degree could give them. They are realizing that their active assistance is just as indispensable as that of men and, what is more, such assistance can be as easily rendered by them as, if not more easily than, by men.

One thing I must not omit before I close these impressions. There were nearly seventy-five volunteers, mostly Brahmins, who were engaged in conservancy work in the Congress camp. The municipal *Bhangis* were indeed taken, but it was thought necessary to have the volunteers also. Kaka Kalelkar who was in charge of this corps tells me that this part of the work would not have been done as satisfactorily as it was, if the corps had not been formed. He tells me too that the volunteers worked most willingly. Not one of them shirked the work which ordinarily very few would be prepared to undertake. And yet it is the noblest of all from one point of view. Indeed sanitary work must be regarded as the foundation of all volunteer training.

Young India, 1-1-1925

403. HOW TO DO IT?

The Congress has taken a tremendous forward step or as some say committed a tremendous folly at the instance of a mad man. Congressmen, whether willing spinners or unwilling, have to justify the step taken by working the spinning franchise. That work which some were doing is now transferred to everyone who wishes to belong to the Congress. It is methodical labour that the Congress requires from every Congressman. If he is unwilling to do that labour, he has to hire it.

[1] *Vide* "Speech Announcing Results of Spinning Competition, Belgaum Congress", 27-12-1924.

The task is obviously difficult. If it were easy, it would not be possible to expect the grand result one expects from its successful working. Even when it was a mere matter of collecting four annas per year, the task was found to be difficult. And today we have not, on the Congress register, in all the provinces fifty thousand such members. Now the Congress expects everyone to spin 2,000 yards per month or to get that quantity spun for him by another. Thus the workers have to keep in continuous touch with the spinners. Therein lies in my opinion the strength of the franchise. It gives the people political education of a high type.

The way to ensure success for every province is to fix the minimum of voters it expects to secure and not to rest till that number is secured. Now throughout India at the lowest computation there are at least five million wheels working. These spinners can all easily belong to the Congress. Those who are taking work from them can now invite them to devote half an hour of their time to the nation by spinning at the wheel for that time. This does not require new organizing. Cotton slivers, etc., are there. All that is necessary is for the organization to make a gift to the Congress of the slivers required to be supplied to the spinners for voluntary or franchise spinning. All that is required of spinners is to give the Congress free labour needed to spin 2,000 yards of yarn. Then there is the voluntary spinning by non-professional spinners. Those who are now spinning have to ask their friends and neighbours to do likewise and become Congress members. This can be best done by each worker founding spinning clubs of twenty. To be efficient these clubs must be small and compact. The first member must be a proficient carder and spinner. For on him in the first instance will fall the burden of collecting cotton, carding it, slivering it and distributing the slivers among the members of the club. The third class of work is to provide for the unwilling spinners. The honestest unwilling spinner will naturally seek out a member of his own family to do the spinning for him. He then ensures the contribution of good and true hand-spun yarn. The next class of unwilling member will himself engage a professional spinner to spin for him. And the last class is that which will buy its yarn from the market and run the risk of having spurious yarn sold for genuine. For the sake of the common cause I would warn the Congressmen who are unwilling against the last method. Registration of membership for the last class is easy and, if many avail themselves of it, the practice will open the floodgates of fraud and may cause an injury to a cottage industry that is struggling to make headway against enormous odds. My hope is that there will be very few

men and women who will be unwilling to spin for the sake of the Congress and the country. The word "unwilling" has found place in the franchise for the sake of meeting the difficulties of those who are old Congressmen and whom I would not like to leave the Congress, even if they were willing to do so. But I shall hope that unwillingness will not be encouraged. Mere production of hand-spun yarn will not make the idle and the starving work. It is the atmosphere of manual work, and that too consisting of hand-spinning, that is required to make the millions retake to the wheel. And that atmosphere can best be produced by all Congressmen regarding it as an honour for themselves personally to spin.

Young India, 1-1-1925

404. NOTES

Two Promises

Here is one promise made by a Tamil delegate:

> I promise to introduce ten thousand charkhas in the city of Madura before 30th April 1926.
>
> *Yours ever devoted,*
> L. K. Tulsiram

The note containing the promise was passed to me by Sjt. Tulsiram at a meeting of the Tamil delegates. The introduction of ten thousand charkhas means, of course, as many members. If the city of Madura can give ten thousand members, how many should the whole of the Tamilnad?

Another promise still more important is made by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. He has solemnly promised that he will have got twenty-five thousand Mussalman spinners as members by the end of my term of office. The Maulana will deserve the highest congratulations, if he succeeds. Not that twenty-five thousand Mussalman members from the Punjab is by any means a large number, if the thing catches. But, when so many are prognosticating a catastrophe, for the Maulana to make the solemn promise is in my opinion a wonderful thing. I have told the Maulana that, if he breaks the promise, I shall have to fast against him. He retorted by saying he did not want me to commit suicide and that he would not have made the promise, if he had not meant it or its fulfilment was impossible. I invite such promises from every province. But no one need make them in a fit of enthusiasm. Mere promises mean nothing if there is not an unalterable resolution behind them.

I know that during the War the authorities used to apportion work for each province, and the provinces had to supply the quota of men or money as the case might be. In that case the supply was fixed for them and default carried penalties of a kind with it. Should the provinces do less because they are called upon to fix their own quota and because breach of promise will carry no penalty with it?

A Prize

Sjt. Revashanker Jagjivan Jhaveri has at my request expressed his wish to give a prize of one thousand rupees to the writer of the best essay on the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar. The essay should trace the histoy of the destruction of the industry and discuss the possibility of its revival. Further terms will be announced in the next issue.

Young India, 1-1-1925

405. *MEANING OF BOLSHEVISM*

The following[1] has been received from Mr. M. N. Roy in reply to my article[2] on Bolshevism. I gladly publish it, but I cannot help saying that, if Mr. Roy's article is a correct representation of Bolshevism, it is a poor thing. I can no more tolerate the yoke of Bolshevism as described by Mr. Roy than of capitalism. I believe in conversion of mankind, not its destruction, and for a very obvious reason. We are all very imperfect and weak things and, if we are to destroy all whose ways we do not like, there will be not a man left alive. Mobocracy is autocracy multiplied million times. But I hope, I am almost sure, that real Bolshevism is much better than Mr. M. N. Roy's.

Young India, 1-1-1925

[1] *Vide* Appendix I.

[2] *Vide* "Bolshevism or Discipline", 21-8-1924.

406. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

ON THE WAY TO SABARMATI,
January 2, 1925

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

It has always been my desire and policy never to write anything to wound the feelings of others. But during the current year when I am out for winning you over I would like to be still more cautious. I know that without wishing it, I may write things which may not please you, i.e., the party. Will you please therefore draw my attention to anything that may appear in *Young India* or *Navajivan* and that may not be quite the proper thing? I shall try to mend wherever it is possible for me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 3115. Courtesy: Kashinath Kelkar

407. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DOHAD

January 2, 1925

I do not want any Gujarati to take advantage of the freedom to unwilling persons given in the resolution on spinning. I see some divine purpose in my release from Yeravda Prison on account of my illness. Providence, it seems, has set me free that I might move through the length and breadth of the country speaking about *Annapoorna*[1], the spinning-wheel, and taking it everywhere. If India would still not respond to the call of spinning, her privations would multiply. It will be no pleasure to me to find Dohad converted into Bombay and half a dozen of its people become millionaires. Everyone has the right to earn food and clothing. But no one has a right to accumulate wealth and be rich. I would not have a handful of you become money-lenders. I would, however, wish that khadi should be sold as easily as ghee and made current everywhere like coins and postal stamps. For those who cannot themselves spin there is a provision to get others to do it for them and thus become eligible for membership. But I would urge that no one from Gujarat may take advantage of

[1] The giver of plentiful food

this provision. Sukhdev tells me he has discontinued spinning. I did not know it. He might be otherwise busy but his discontinuation of spinning is intolerable. It would be a miserable plight if our workers themselves do not spin. It is not as if Sukhdev does not approve of spinning, it is only his laziness. I won't have this excuse from any Gujarati.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-1-1925

408. SPEECH AT ANTYAJA ASHRAM, GODHRA

January 2, 1925

You have heard a number of dialogues and *bhajans*. Who would say that these dialogues were by *Antyaja* children or that it was they who sang the *bhanjans* in devotion to God? Who would have expected this outcome of the conference? While discussing the resolution about the outcastes, I had suggested that all people should visit their colony. I had taken it that delegates of the conference belonged to Godhra. But I had forgotten that most of them who had come were not the residents of Godhra. However, most of them were from Gujarat. We opened an *Antyaja* school out of the money we collected at that time. The people of Godhra did not welcome it. What is more, they showed their dislike of it. *Antyaja* brothers also reciprocated these sentiments. It was difficult to get *Antyaja* boys for the *Antyaja* school. There was a time when I was seriously inclined to consider closing down the school. But then we put it off.

Mama[1] belongs to Maharashtra but he knows Gujarati. I had seen in the Ashram that he loves working among the *Antyajas*. I advised him to plant himself firmly in Godhra. Subsequently I went to jail and Vallabhbhai took upon himself the heavy burden of administration. It was then that the house was built. I do not like it. It is not that it is incomplete but it does us no credit. It does not want in elegance but it should be such as to do us credit. Mama is not an architect but his heart is filled with love and piety. He was drawn by his love towards *Antyajas* and spent Rs. 20,000. Vallabhbhai could not collect that amount. But fortunately Parsi Rustomjee had given money for work of this kind. Some of it was appropriated for the house which has been built. But that ought to be suitable for us, the *Antyaja*, the poor.

[1] Viththal Lakshman Phadke

We are all poor people and the *Antyajas* are poorer still. They are a flock without a pastor. In forsaking them Hindus have sinned. You should all take up the attitude that an impressive house has been built but you would not grudge it [to them]. If it were the hostel for *Vanik*[1] students you might do that. I agree that there should be no structure which does not reflect the state of the Indian people. There are more elegant buildings used for the children of other communities. But the thought should never enter your mind that the *Antyajas* have no right to such buildings, even though we may try to convert them also. Here I am merely debating the issue. But it would be a good thing if some wealthy man of Godhra took it over. We should then go to another place more suitable for the poor. But in the meantime Mama should put up with it.

Today I had been to three places in the *Antyaja* colony. There it was animals that I saw, not human beings. Talking to them one finds them different from us, but they also recognize love. If we are not responsible for their pitiful condition, who else is? To me the cause of swaraj is small besides that of serving these people. It was not because I thought it would hasten swaraj that I started working for these people. There was no talk of swaraj then; thirty years ago, when I was in South Africa, I had expressed my views on service to the *Antyajas*. Today we are not conserving the Hindu dharma, but destroying it. I wish that you should take up this service in order to save it from destruction. You, who have come here, had better realize that you are not polluted but have been sanctified. I say without hesitation that those places where there is *Antyaja* service, where there is an *Antyaja* school or an *Antyaja* ashram, that is a place of pilgrimage, because holy places are those where we wash off our sins and make ready to swim to the other shore. Why are one's parents holiness incarnate? Why are one's gurus holiness incarnate? If we serve people with all our heart we become purified. Do not imagine that you have been polluted and that you should bathe. If you had not known that those who treated you to the dialogues were *Antyaja* boys, would you have believed it? If we exert ourselves to the utmost over these children, they may surpass us. Don't suppose that the children of *Bhangis* can't have good thoughts. Let me tell you from experience that they will have them, if we also help. I appeal to you that those of you who have come here should not consider this as their last visit. You should come here from time to time to serve.

[1] Business community

The existence of this association for serving *Antyajas* is due to Indulal[1]. He has done solid service. He was thinking about it even while in jail. We should forgive him if in a flush of enthusiasm he has done something which we may not like. His exile over, Amritlal[2] has come here. Now he has become the high priest of *Dheds*, *Bhangis* and Bhils. When Indulal was considering leaving the Antyaja Seva Mandal, I thought of entrusting it to the Vidyapith. Amritlal said we should not let it go. He took the burden upon himself. But how much burden can a single person carry? You should also help him. There is a great deal of work for the Antyaja Seva Mandal to do. The *Antyaja* map of Gujarat is being drawn. I do not know that Godhra has contributed a single paisa. If the Lord indeed dwells within you, then send the money to Amritlal or Mama. And let your mind go with the money.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 12-4

409. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GODHRA

January 2, 1925

It is not religion but rather its very opposite to regard the outcastes as untouchables by birth. I am convinced that those who do not regard me a *sanatani* are ignorant. You will say there are pandits who defend untouchability. But the words of Akha[3] that "learning without thinking is futile" apply to them. There is a kind of untouchability in Hinduism, namely, that of keeping away from the impure, that is, from wicked, fraudulent, lustful or unchaste persons. Look upon them as untouchables and run away from them; but would you run away from the person who serves you, who removes your filth, who tans your leather and forges your farming tools and regard him as an untouchable? This is hypocrisy, not Hinduism. I would ask you to shun them if Hinduism did indeed teach that they were untouchables. This idea that Hinduism teaches untouchability is only an illusion. If you were compassionate, the ignorance among *Bhangis* would make you weep and you would be awakened to your own respon-

[1] Indulal Yagnik; an active political worker from whom Gandhiji took over *Navajivan*

[2] A. V. Thakkar

[3] Akha Bhagat, Gujarati poet of the 17th century

sibilities. If you abandon me, drive me away cruelly and, as a result, I turn mad, is it my fault or yours? In like manner, is it through their fault or yours that the poor *Bhangis* and *Dheds* are penniless and destitute, their ignorance is abysmal and they are given to addictions? The fault is certainly yours and I wish you to remove it and purify yourselves.

I see a great purpose in God saving me from a serious illness in Yeravda Prison and releasing me for your service. The purpose is that I should come to you and give you self-confidence, put before you the fruit of profound meditation in prison, namely, the key to swaraj lies in fulfilling three conditions alone—in the spinning-wheel, in Hindu-Muslim unity and in the removal of untouchability. The reason that I have mentioned the spinning-wheel first is that amongst these three, we are sceptical about it alone and, secondly because it is the spinning-wheel alone which demands from us honest daily work. If I wish to work half an hour a day for Hindu-Muslim unity or removal of untouchability, I would be hard put to it to imagine what to do. But the plying of the spinning-wheel for half an hour is concrete work. It is an inanimate object, but there is an irresistible power behind it. I ask everyone to get ready to activate it. You find khadi coarse. If you say that khadi irritates your skin, it would amount to saying that this country irritates you. And, how can he, whom his country irritates, win swaraj? Tilak Maharaj used to say that he was pained when he heard anyone talk of going abroad for a change of climate. Since God ordained my birth here, would He not have provided that I should keep healthy in this climate? Although it is bitterly cold in England, do the English run away from their country? They light fires in their homes, put on woollen clothes, and take all precautions. What do the multimillionaires do here? They think of a change of climate. I tell you that this is a grave error on their part. In like manner, our patriotism consists in wearing indigenous khadi, whether it is expensive or cheap, good or bad, coarse or fine; otherwise it is meaningless to speak of one's motherland. Would any mother abandon her own ugly child and take into her lap another's comely child? I hope that you would have the same God-given love and affection for India, for the grain that is grown here and for khadi. If every man in Godhra produced khadi worth five rupees, how much money would a population of 25,000 save? If that amount is saved, the people of Godhra would become to that extent prosperous. You will become stronger and your patriotism will shine forth. The spinning-wheel alone is a thing which enables all—men, women and children, the rich and

the poor—to contribute equally and which brings about great good. Remember the saying that drop by drop fills the lake and keep filling the lake of swaraj by contributing two thousand yards of yarn. Do you believe that you will win swaraj by Vamanrao's going to the Legislative Assembly and glaring at the Government? I would then ask you to go and talk of yarn and khadi even there. If, however, you cannot boycott foreign cloth, swaraj will not be won even by Vallabhbhai or five thousand persons like Vamanrao entering the Legislative Assembly.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-1-1925

410. TO KATHIAWARIS

Circumstances take me to Kathiawar. I know and understand the affection of Kathiawaris. However, what I want is work. I find there is a difference between my method and that of the recently trained generation. It is ludicrous to make me the President despite this difference. In spite of the fact that resolutions drafted by me have been adopted by the Congress, many persons have been telling me that no one will implement them. How am I to believe such a dreadful thing?

As I had nothing new to place before the Congress, so too, I shall have nothing new to say to Kathiawar. The truth is that I have already said what I have to say. Somehow I have to repeat the same things over again. My thoughts dwell only with the poor. I want swaraj for the *Bhangis*, for the labourers. I keep thinking of how to make them happy. When shall we get off their backs? While we ask for our rights, it is for me to speak of their rights and our duties.

How good it would be if I could explain my standpoint to the Kathiawaris? Is it something impossible? Man lives by hope. The same is true of me. Some day India must necessarily listen to what I have to say. Could not Kathiawar make a beginning?

The organizers have undertaken to prepare the atmosphere for me. They will certainly show me that the whole place is full of khadi. They will certainly have an exhibition of the arts and crafts of Kathiawar. What a beautiful exhibition was held in Belgaum! There is no dearth of art in Kathiawar. There is nothing lacking in its flora. What beautiful cattle there are in Kathiawar! Shall I have a glimpse of these? I do not wish to see the glorification of the West. I have seen enough of it there. On the

contrary, I am trying to recall Indian things which have been neglected. It is these I wish to see.

Kathiawar is of course well known for its courtesy. I would request the Reception Committee not to be carried away by an excess of it. While time is endless, the human body has its limitations. We have to achieve much with the help of this transient body; every moment has, therefore, to be properly utilized.

I hope that the organizers will see to it that each task is done punctually. If those resolutions which are to be considered by the Conference[1] have been already framed, we shall be able to give more thought to them. I would suggest that enough time be allotted to the Subjects Committee. I hope that while drafting the resolutions it will be borne in mind that we shall succeed if we lay greater stress on our duties.

Let me suggest one way of saving time. Welcome should come from the heart. You will, therefore, realize that there will be no need for any outward signs of welcome. To spend time in processions, etc., is as good as stealing it from the real task to be accomplished. It should not be forgotten that in the course of two days a programme has to be chalked out for serving twenty-six lakhs of people. In order to satisfy thousands of men and women who will assemble, some showy items will no doubt be necessary. We have already seen in Belgaum that there is nothing like holding an exhibition in order to meet this need.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 4-1-1925

411. WILLING AND UNWILLING

The Congress session has concluded without a hitch. There was a solitary item on the agenda, it may be said, namely, adoption of spinning as an essential duty of every Indian. If this has been resolved in all sincerity, this session of the Congress may come to be historic. But historians might condemn it if we have taken this step without an honest intention of fulfilling it.

I have no reason to believe that we might have agreed to the step without honest faith or with mental reservations. The resolution, which has now been adopted, itself speaks of two groups—the "willing" and the "unwilling". The latter accept the necessity of spinning as such, though not on their own part. This group, too, have agreed to send 24,000 yards of yarn a year, but it is now the

[1] Kathiawar Political Conference

duty of the willing to persuade the unwilling. If those who are willing go on spinning regularly, the unwilling will also realize the duty of spinning themselves.

Let us hope there is no unwilling group in Gujarat. Let us not bother about the small number of the willing. Let us only mind our own work. If one wishes to become a member of the Congress without spinning oneself, one has every right to do so.

But in Gujarat we have not come across any persons who are reluctant to spin themselves. Initially the number of spinners may be small. But if we have active workers, I am convinced that with their help we shall be able to achieve much.

Gujarat can if it so desires give a lead in this matter. Gujarat has all the resources. Only the people must have the will. And it is the task of the workers to create that will. This will test our capacity to organize, our patriotism, our strength of character and other qualities.

Spread of spinning is spread of khadi and khadi propagation means complete boycott of foreign cloth. Thus we should put in much more effort for the propagation of khadi than we have done so far. And the spread of khadi means the spread of Gujarat khadi. Having produced its own cloth if Gujarat itself does not consume the same, it will never witness the miracle of khadi. All the other crafts will follow in the wake of khadi and Gujarat's economy will get a fillip.

Gujarat may not suffer from scarcity but it lacks vigour. Gujarat's children do not get milk. In case of a famine the people of Gujarat go begging. This seldom happens anywhere except in India. It is only when Gujarat completely boycotts foreign cloth that we shall be saved from this plight.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 4-1-1925

412. LETTER TO REHANA TYABJI

January 5, 1925

MY DEAR REHANA,

I am glad you are coming. Do you know that a friend of my father got cured of his malady by constant attendance on God? May you not do likewise? You can be well, if you will be well.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9599

413. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [January 5, 1925]

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I shall take up another programme only after I reach Bhavnagar and feel like doing so. Do not bind me from today. I am very tired and I have yet to attend many functions.

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI FULCHAND KASTURCHAND
KELAVANI MANDAL KARYALAYA
WADHWAN CITY

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2824. Courtesy: Sharadabehn Shah

414. LETTER TO AVANTIKABAI GOKHALE

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [January 5, 1925]

DEAR SISTER,

I was deeply pained to hear from Chi. Chhaganlal about your financial condition. Why did you not tell me about it till now? What has happened cannot be undone. Both of you can come and stay here whenever you wish to. Regard this as your home. Dr. Mehta's bungalow is at present vacant; you can occupy a part of it. We shall think about building a new house later on. I had already made this suggestion for the sake of your health. Here, too, you will be able to do public work. Make up your mind soon. Do not harbour the false idea that you cannot come here.

Write to me about your health. Send your reply to Bhavnagar. I intend to stay there from the 8th to 13th. Write to me at Sir Prabhashanker Pattani's address.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4838. Courtesy: Bombay State Committee for C.W.M.G.

415. LETTER TO KAPIL THAKKAR

ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Posh[1] *Sud 11, 1981* [*January 5, 1925*][2]

BHAISHRI KAPIL

I have your letter. I am sorry I shall not be able to go to Botad this time as I have no time.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

BHAISHRI KAPIL THAKKAR
BHAVNAGAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2896. Courtesy: Kapil Thakkar

416. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [*January 5, 1925*]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I think it is only fair for me to inform you that Lakshmi, an untouchable girl, will be with me. If my presence may be considered objectionable at any place on that account, please give me a hint and I shall understand and will, of my own accord, insist on not visiting that place so that nobody is put in an awkward situation. I leave all this to you.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Guiarati original: C.W. 3188. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

[1] The source has *Magsar*.
[2] From the postmark

417. LETTER TO LAKSHMINIWAS BIRLA

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [*January 5, 1925*]

CHI. LAKSHMINIWAS,

I was very glad to have your letter.

It is quite true that all should ply the charkha. Like the cycle of the universe, the charkha may never be still in any Indian home. The charkha, I think, is all the more necessary for the rich. I do hope you will all ply the charkha and send the yarn to me.

Blessings from your well-wisher
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6101. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

418. TELEGRAM TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

SABARMATI,
January 7, 1925

TO
SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

BEFORE RECEIVING YOUR WIRE I REPLIED RECEPTION COMMITTEE I WOULD BE IN THEIR HANDS DURING CONFERENCE. FEEL IT IS BOTH PROPER AND NECESSARY I SHOULD BE THEIR GUEST. I MUST AVOID SETTING EMBARRASSING PRECEDENT FOR SUCCESSORS. DEVCHANDBHAI[1] AGREES AND PROPERLY INSISTS MY BEING GUEST RECEPTION COMMITTEE. PRAY THEREFORE EXCUSE TILL NINTH.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5875

[1] Devchand Parekh; barrister; social worker of Kathiawar

419. THE WORKING COMMITTEE

The selection of the Working Committee was ultimately left by the A.I.C.C. to Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and me. I have been charged with having yielded everything to the Swarajists. If I have done so, I pride myself on the fact. Full surrender must be full. The fact however is that no pressure whatsoever was put upon me to withdraw a single No-changer's name. I deliberately withdrew C. Rajagopalachari's, Vallabhbhai's and Shankerlal Banker's names. It was a matter of honour to have Sarojini Devi and Sardar Mangal Singh on the Committee. Mr. Kelkar was anxious to retire in favour of Mr. Aney. I would not listen to it. And I was anxious to have Mr. Aney as soon as his name was mentioned. Let the reader rest assured that the whole selection was made in a spirit of perfect comradeship. Assume honesty (and it must be assumed) on the part of both the groups and the task of either is difficult enough. Although the degree of faith and therefore the emphasis is different, both have to strive to find a common method of working the common programme. In a Working Committee with a decided majority of No-changers strong resolutions can no doubt be carried for khaddar work but they cannot carry much weight with those who have only reluctantly accepted the khaddar franchise. Whereas resolutions of a Working Committee in which the predominant voice is that of the Swarajists, though they may be mild are sure to carry far greater weight with the Swarajists. And my business is to carry the latter with me whole-heartedly. I want to act upon them and I want them to act upon me. Nothing, therefore, can be better than that the Swarajist leaders and among them the ablest and most uncompromising opponents of the spinning franchise and I should be thrown together in an atmosphere in which we must pull together. I do not need that kind of contact with the enthusiasts. They are expected to work away with all the strength that conviction must give them. They do not need resolutions or instructions as spur to action. If, therefore, we mean in the course of the year to achieve an unbreakable unity between the two wings, the selection of the Working Committee is, I hold, ideal. Anyway, it must produce an atmosphere the most favourable for the purpose.

I shall leave no stone unturned to achieve the end. Hence I propose during the year to carry no motion or proposal that might be of a party character. Neither the spinning-wheel nor the boycott

of foreign cloth can be expeditiously worked in the teeth of opposition from within the Congress ranks. Indeed we must strive to gain the support of non-Congressmen for the national constructive programme. They may not like spinning or wearing khaddar as part of the franchise, but I have not met many Liberals who have any objection to hand-spinning as a cottage industry or to the use of khaddar as such and apart from the franchise. It may be constitutionally impossible for all parties to accept the existing Congress creed or the new franchise, and therefore to become Congressmen. But I hope that the existence of the creed or the new franchise will not be a bar against joint work wherever it is possible.

Young India, 8-1-1925

420. BELGAUM IMPRESSIONS [*-II*]

Namdharis

I had a hard time of it meeting all and sundry and trying to give them satisfaction. The Namdhari Sikhs brought me a bundle of papers and expected me to attend to their grievance against the Akalis. Their patience and courtesy disarmed all unwillingness on my part. But my inability to attend to their cause was much greater than my unwillingness. Time would not wait even for their courtesy. They were themselves able to see that I was perfectly helpless. The only comfort I was able to give them was that when I next visited Lahore, I would certainly go through their papers and see to it that the Congress did them no injustice. I told them that although I was partial to the cause of the brave Akalis, I would be no party to any injustice or oppression being committed by them. Sardar Mangal Singh re-echoed my sentiment and said that he was always ready to show that the Akalis wanted nothing but reform of the gurdwaras on a strictly moral basis.

Plea for Buddhists

Mr. Pereira of Ceylon wanted me to interest the Congress in the Buddha Gaya temple. The reader will remember that a movement has been in progress for some years for the restoration to Buddhists of the great and historic temple at Buddha Gaya. But it seems to have made no tangible headway. At the Cocanada Congress Babu Rajendra Prasad was appointed to inquire into the matter and report. He had not been able to do so up to the time of the meeting. A Buddhist deputation came from Ceylon to Belgaum during the Congress week to plead the Buddhist cause

personally before the Congress. Mr. Pereira had seen several leaders and then saw me. He really did not need to plead his cause before me. I was already a convert. But here again what was I to do? I had no time for anything else beyond what I had already undertaken. But Mr. Pereira was irresistible. I told him that I believed in his cause as much as he did, but the Congress might not be able to help him much. He was persistent and took away from me the promise that I should at least let him address the Subjects Committee and let him take the chance of being rejected. Mr. Pereira had confidence in himself. His pleasing manners and his brief but eloquent speech made an impression upon the Committee which decided to consider the question there and then. But alas! Upon discussion the Committee discovered that it could not materially assist Mr. Pereira; it had not the report of its own deputy; it had exhaustively discussed the subject at the previous session and owing to sharp differences was obliged to drop it. The only thing, therefore, the Committee was able to do was to ask Rajendra Babu to hasten his inquiry and let the Working Committee have his report on or before the end of the present month. There is no doubt that the possession of the temple should vest in the Buddhists. There may be legal difficulties. They must be overcome. If the report is true that animal sacrifice is offered in the temple, it is a sacrilege. It is equally a sacrilege if the worship is offered, as it is alleged, in a way calculated to wound the susceptibilities of Buddhists. We should take pride in helping the restoration of the temple to the rightful trustees. I hope Rajendra Babu will secure all the literature on the subject and produce a report which can serve as a guide for all who wish to advance the cause of the Buddhist claimants. Let me hope also that Mr. Pereira has remained in India and is assisting Rajendra Babu.

Teachers in Conference

The national teachers met in informal conference and came to definite conclusions. The debate was interesting. It centred round the charkha. Learned pandits attended the conference. I hope that the teachers will carry out to the letter and in the spirit the resolutions addressed to themselves. It has been the bane of the national life to pass resolutions and never to enforce them. The teachers should be the last persons in the world to make vain promises. They have in their hands the moulding of the youth of the country. Let them know that the students are sure to copy their bad example of breach of their own word in preference to their lofty sermons on the sacredness of resolutions and promises.

This year is a year of trial and test for the nation. The Congress has staked its all practically on a single issue, i.e., the production and sale of khaddar and the boycott of foreign cloth. The national schools to be national have to assist this national work by the teachers and boys and girls learning the various processes incidental to the production of khaddar, by wearing it themselves and by spinning as much yarn as they can. Their other studies need not be neglected but they dare not omit the things that are required for the vital needs of the nation. The teachers have by an overwhelming majority accepted the position. I hope they will make it good by acting up to their promise.

Students

The students too met in conference. These were not merely of the national schools and colleges but they were principally from Government schools. Mr. Reddy, the President, had a scheme for utilizing the vacation and other leisure hours of students. His scheme was to commit the students (he would include the *vakils* also) to giving the nation at least 28 evenings every year, each volunteer to take up four villages in his neighbourhood as his field of work. Mr. Reddy proposed a course of lectures on a variety of subjects. For the time being I would occupy the leisure hours of these volunteers for the spread of khaddar. But this service is not the only way the students and practising *vakils* can help. Surely the least they can do is to use khaddar themselves and spin half an hour per day. The *vakils* and students over 21 years should become members of the Congress and those who are under age should send their yarn as donation either to their own committee or to the A.I.K.B.

Young India, 8-1-1925

421. NOTES

For Provincial Committee

I hope that provincial Congress committees will lose no time in organizing the new franchise. I know that some Congressmen are waiting for instructions from the Working Committee as to the method of work before commencing enrolment. Such waiting is, however, wholly unnecessary. It is not the Working Committee that has to organize the work under the new franchise. The burden rests with every province, and the sooner they com-

mence the better it is for the purpose for which the new franchise has been introduced. Congressmen should remember that at the end of February the existing list of members falls into desuetude. If provincial committees wait till then for enrolment, they will find that they have not even a quorum to go on with. Membership should, therefore, be actively canvassed from now. I had hoped to publish some valuable information supplied to me by Sjt. Satish Chandra Das Gupta as to the method of organization. I have also before me two illuminating volumes on khaddar work written by Satish Babu and published by Khadi Pratisthan. The first volume deals with the manner of organizing spinning and weaving and the second volume collects all the available information about cotton. The volumes are seasonable. I hope to condense some of the information made available to the public by their industrious author. Those who can afford to buy the volumes should possess them. They should write to the Khadi Pratisthan, 15, College Square, Calcutta, for them. The price of the first volume is two rupees and that of the second is one rupee.

To Spinners

Several spinners, who have been sending their yarn either to the A.I.K.B. or to me, inquire what they are to do now. They are to send in their yarn as usual for the month of December. All that the adults may spin from the beginning of the year should naturally be retained and sent in to the respective provincial committees as their monthly subscription for membership. Hitherto spinners have sent in what they have spun and many have sent in even less than 2,000 yards. Now they are bound, to be entitled to a living membership, to send not less than 2,000 yards per month. They may send more if they choose. They should take care to have a receipt for the exact quantity sent. They will get credit for the balance over 2,000 yards for the next month's quota. Minors may send yarn to the provincial Congress committees as donations. They cannot claim membership. There are however many such who, I am told, would send their yarn only to me. I would advise them to send their yarn to their respective committees; but if they will not do so, I would be glad as usual to receive their yarn and turn it to good account.

Prize Essay

The terms of the prize essay on the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar are:

1. The essay should be in English in four parts: the first part to contain the history of hand-spinning and the khaddar (meaning hand-spun, including the celebrated *shubnum*[1] of Dacca), trade of India before the British advent; the second part should trace the history of the ruin of hand-spinning and the khaddar trade; the third part should be an examination of the possibilities of hand-spinning and khaddar and a comparison between the Indian mill industry and hand-spinning and hand-weaving; the fourth part should examine the possibilities of achieving boycott of foreign cloth through the spinning-wheel. The essay should be supported by authoritative statistics and should have an appendix containing a list of all the reference books and authorities used by the author in support of his argument.

2. The essay may be as brief as the competitors wish to make it, consistently with the giving of a full record of facts and figures.

3. The essay should be sent to the office of *Young India* by registered book post with the author's name on a separate sheet and should reach the office of *Young India* not later than 15th March next. The judges will be Messrs Shankerlal Banker, Maganlal K. Gandhi and myself. The result will be announced not later than 31st March 1925. The judges will reserve to themselves the right of rejecting all the essays if they fall below a certain standard. The prize will be paid to the winner on the announcement thereof. The right of publication will vest in the All-India Khadi Board in accordance with the donor's wishes.

I hope that those scholars who are interested in the great spinning movement and who have studied the subject will consider it worth their while to enter into the competition.

Poverty a Cause

A Bengali friend writing about unity says:

> In Bengal, perhaps in other provinces also, the economic distress of the educated middle-classes hinders the growth of public spirit and patriotism. The young men crowd the meetings and applaud the speeches. When they go out of schools and colleges they begin to feel the struggle for existence. It damps their youthful vigour and enthusiasm and they cease to take any practical interest in national work.

The evil, as the writer rightly judges, is more or less common to all the provinces. The remedy is clear. No Government

[1] Literally dew; here a name for the fine muslin formerly woven in Dacca

can find employment for the increasing number of students year after year. The only way to solve the puzzle is to revise the common idea about education, that it is a means of finding a career in life. Education should be taken for our mental and moral development. Secondly, the army of unemployed young men should realize the dignity of labour and qualify themselves for taking up the organization of the charkha industry. It can take in an unlimited number of young men if they were willing to take the necessary training and to go to the villages and to be satisfied with a modest income.

Young India, 8-1-1925

422. SPEECH AT SUBJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING, BHAVNAGAR

January 8, 1925

Today the spinning-wheel is the only way to the people's hearts. Evil reigns everywhere, and dharma can be re-established only through the spinning-wheel. We are at present hanging in mid-air like Trishanku[1], and the wheel is the only device to take us out of this dreadful situation. We can hope to influence the masses only through the wheel and through it alone will the Government learn a sense of duty. A gentleman asks if even men with moustaches should sit at the wheel. I should like to remind him that in the present circumstances, we should be ashamed of our moustaches. Is it men or women that operate the Lancashire machines and thereby run the Empire? It is again only men who write books on this subject. Women may cook in the kitchen at home, but in the case of community feasts they must give over cooking to moustached men. Some Brahmins and others plead their superior caste. I do agree that the caste system stands for division of functions. But function means the primary or chief function, whereas all the other functions can as well be common to all, in fact they ought to be so today. Shri Satish Chandra Das Gupta has evolved a Shastra for the wheel. I have a charming letter from a revenue officer at Palitana, which says: "I spin regularly but neither the Dewan

[1] The mythological king whom the sage Vishwamitra lifted up to the heavens, but whom the gods refused admission

nor the Thakore Sahib[1] objects to this. The more I spin, the more strength I acquire. Indeed I may carry a small wheel even while riding." Is it any wonder if such officers become popular among the subjects? How else would the people be crazy about you? When for the first time King George was posted to a man-of-war as a trainee, he used to partake of the same black coffee, black bread and cheese as the other sailors. There were no special arrangements for his board and lodging. He was also given the same outfit as the ratings. When you know this you will understand why the British people are crazy about King George. The prince and the people, the leader and the masses can be bound together by the thread from the wheel. I had been to Moti Marad. Though the village is quite far from a railway station I found that *malmal*[2] had reached there. We came to know about the existence of seven lakh villages in our country only when we came under the British Empire. No power in the past ever penetrated any of these seven lakh villages, but now calico and *manjli*[3] have done it.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 18-1-1925

423. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BHAVNAGAR

January 8, 1925

The following is an English translation[4] of Mr. Gandhi's Presidential Address at the Third Kathiawar Political Conference held at Bhavnagar on the 8th instant:

FRIENDS,

The Presidentship of the Kathiawar Political Conference had been offered to me before I went to jail, but I had then refused to shoulder the responsibility attaching to that honourable position. As the reasons which then prompted my refusal do not exist any longer, I have accepted the honour now, though not without trepidation—trepidation because there is a wide divergence between my own views and the views held by many on political questions. Again the fact that I am President of the National Congress for the current year makes things rather awk-

[1] Ruler
[2] Mull
[3] Mill-cloth
[4] For the Gujarati report *vide Navajivan* Supplement, 18-1-1925.

ward for me. That single burden is more than I can fairly discharge, and it would be almost too much for me during the year to undertake to guide the activities of this Conference in addition. If therefore presiding over your deliberations today implies any such responsibility, I may say that I am not at all in a position to do it justice. Moreover, it would be unfair if the views which I express as President here are imputed to the Congress simply because I happen to lead it also.

It is necessary, therefore, for me to make it clear at the outset that my views about the Indian States have nothing to do with the views of the members of the Congress. My views are personal to me. They do not bear the *imprimatur* of the Congress.

If I have been deemed worthy to be President of this Conference, I think it is because I am a native of Kathiawar and also because I enjoy close relations with the workers in this Conference. It is only an accident that I happen to lead the Congress at present.

Before I come to the subject proper, I must place on record the demise of Bhai Mansukhlal. You all know about my relations with him. No wonder that you must feel his absence today; but I cannot disguise the fact that I feel it very keenly. The death of the poet Mr. Manishanker Ratanji Bhatt is also equally a matter for sorrow to you and to me. I had not the privilege of knowing him intimately. It is no small thing that his assistance is no longer available to us. May God give to the families of both the patience to bear their loss and may the knowledge that we share their grief lighten their sorrow.

The Congress and Indian States

I have often declared that the Congress should generally adopt a policy of non-interference with regard to questions affecting Indian States. At a time when the people of British India are fighting for their own freedom, for them to interfere with the affairs of the Indian States would only be to betray impotence. Just as the Congress clearly cannot have any effective voice in the relations between Indian States and the British Government, even so will its interference be ineffective as to the relations between the Indian States and their subjects.

Still the people in British India as well as in the Indian States are one, for India is one. There is no difference, for example, between the needs and the manners and customs of Indians in Baroda and of Indians in Ahmedabad. The people of Bhavnagar are closely related with the people of Rajkot. Still,

thanks to artificial conditions, the policy of Rajkot may be different from that of Bhavnagar. The existence of different policies in connection with one and the same people is a state of things which cannot last for any length of time. Consequently, even without any interference by the Congress, the unseen pressure of circumstances alone must lead to the unification of policies in spite of a multitude of separate jurisdictions. Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.

But I am firmly of opinion that so long as British India is not free, so long as the people of British India have not attained real power, that is to say, so long as British India has not the power of self-expression, in a word, so long as British India does not obtain swaraj, so long will India, British as well as Native, remain in a distracted condition. The existence of a third power depends upon a continuance of such distraction. We can put our house in order only when British India has attained swaraj.

The Status of Indian States Under Swaraj

When swaraj is attained, what will things be like? There will be a relation of mutual aid and co-operation and destructive conflict will be a thing of the past. British India under swaraj will not wish for the destruction of the Indian States, but will be helpful to them. And the Indian States will adopt a corresponding attitude towards British India.

The present condition of Indian States is in my opinion somewhat pitiable. For the Princes have no independence. Real power does not consist in the ability to inflict capital punishment upon the subjects, but in the will and the ability to protect the subjects against the world. Today Indian States do not have this ability, and consequently by disuse the will also is as good as gone. On the other hand their power to oppress the subjects appears to have increased. As there is anarchy in the Empire, there is anarchy in the States subordinate to the Empire. The anarchy in the States is not so much due to the Princes and the Chiefs as it is very largely to the present condition of India.

The present condition of India being opposed to the laws of Nature, that is of God, we find disorder and unrest all over the country. I definitely hold that all will be well if one of the component parts of India becomes self-governing.

Who Must Begin?

Who then must take the first step? It is obvious that British India must lead the way. The people there have a consciousness

of their horrible condition and a desire to be free from it, and as knowledge follows in the wake of desire, so those people only who wish to be rid of their peril will find out and apply the means of deliverance. I have therefore often said that the liberation of British India spells the liberation of the States as well. When the auspicious day of the freedom of British India arrives, the relation of ruler and ruled in the Indian States will not cease but will be purified. Swaraj as conceived by me does not mean the end of kingship. Nor does it mean the end of capital. Accumulated capital means ruling power. I am for the establishment of right relations between capital and labour, etc. I do not wish for the supremacy of the one over the other. I do not think there is any natural antagonism between them. The rich and the poor will always be with us. But their mutual relations will be subject to constant change. France is a republic, but there are all classes of men in France.

Let us not be deluded by catchwords. Every single corruption which we notice in India is equally present in the so-called highly civilized nations of the West if under a variety of names. It is distance that lends enchantment to the view; hence things Western become invested with a sort of glamour in our eyes. In fact there are perpetual differences even in the West between the rulers and the ruled. There, too, people seek for happiness and suffer misery in return.

About the Indian States

Many Kathiawaris complain to me against the Princes and Chiefs of this beautiful country and take me to task for what they imagine to be my indifference. These impatient friends will perhaps not understand me when I say that I have not been indifferent, but have been seeking for and applying the remedies for the present disorders. I have staked my all in the movement for swaraj in the hope that swaraj is a certain cure for all our maladies. As darkness vanishes at sunrise, so when the sun of swaraj rises, the dark anarchy of rulers as well as of subjects will disappear in an instant.

Visits to Europe

The administration of Indian States is the subject of constant criticism from which this small province has not been free. There is one common complaint about the Princes and Chiefs. Their fondness for visits to Europe increases day by day. One can understand their going to Europe on business or for the acquisi-

tion of knowledge. But a visit to Europe in the search of mere pleasure would seem to be intolerable. When a Prince passes most of his time outside his State, there is chaos in his State. We have seen that in this age of democracy and dissemination of knowledge no State or organization which is not popular or beneficial to the people can continue to exist. Indian States are not immune from the operation of this law. Their administration will always be compared with that of the British now, and of the swaraj government when swaraj has been established. King George cannot leave England without the consent of his ministers. And yet his responsibilities are not so great as those of Indian Princes. Indian Princes retain all power in their own hands. They make the appointments even to minor posts. Their permission is needed even for the construction of a bridge. In these circumstances their visits to Europe are very distasteful to their subjects.

The expenditure incurred on these visits is also intolerable. If the institution of kingship has a moral basis, Princes are not independent proprietors but only trustees of their subjects for revenue received from them. It can therefore be spent by them only as trust money. It may be said that this principle has been almost completely carried out in the English Constitution. In my humble opinion the lavish expenditure incurred by our Princes in Europe is absolutely indefensible.

Sometimes this expenditure in Europe is sought to be justified on the plea that Princes go there for the benefit of their health. This plea is perfectly ludicrous. No one need, in the search of health, leave a country where Himalaya, the king of mountains, exercises undisturbed sway, and which is watered by such mighty rivers as the Ganges, the Indus, and the Brahmaputra. A country where millions of men enjoy perfect health should be enough to supply the Princes' needs on that score.

Imitation of the West

But perhaps the worst disadvantage of these excursions is the shallow imitation of the West by the Princes. We have much to learn and receive from the West, but there is also much in it which must be rejected. There is no reason to suppose that what suits the climate of Europe will equally suit all climates. Experience teaches us that different things suit different climates. The manners and customs of the West could be but ill-digested by the East, and *vice versa*. Among Western nations men and women dance together, it is said, with restraint and, as report goes, do not overstep the bounds of decency although they indulge in spiri-

tuous liquors during the intervals of their dances. I need scarcely say what would be the consequences if we were to imitate this custom. How shameful to us is the case of an Indian Prince which is being discussed in the newspapers just now in all its hideous detail?

UNCHECKED EXPENDITURE

Another complaint is made in connection with the unchecked expenditure of Princes and Chiefs. Much of this is difficult to defend. Princes may have the right to spend money on luxuries and pleasure within limit. But I take it that even they do not wish for unrestricted liberty in this matter.

REVENUE SYSTEM

The revenue system in the States is also not free from blame. I am confident that their imitation of the British system has done a great injury to their subjects. The British revenue system may have a shadow of justification if we grant that it is morally right for a handful of Englishmen to maintain their hold over our country in any and every circumstance. There can be no such plea of compelling necessity in the case of the Indian Princes. They have nothing to fear from their subjects as their existence is never in danger. They do not need a large military force; no Prince has got this and the British would never permit it. Still they levy a taxation far beyond the capacity of the subjects to pay. I am pained to observe that our ancient tradition that revenue is intended only for popular welfare has been receiving but scant respect.

"ABKARI"

The Princes' imitation of the British *Abkari* Department in order to increase their revenue is particularly distressing. It is said that *abkari* is an ancient curse in India. I do not believe it to be so in the sense in which it is put. Princes in ancient times perhaps derived some revenue from the liquor traffic, but they never made the people the slaves of drink that they are now. Even granting that I am wrong that *abkari* in its present form has not been in existence from times immemorial, still I do not subscribe to the superstition that everything is good because it is ancient. I do not believe either that anything is good because it is Indian. He who runs may see that opium and such other intoxicants and narcotics stupefy a man's soul and reduce him to a level lower than that of beasts. Trade in them is demonstrably sinful. Indian States should close all liquor shops and thus set a good example

for the British administrators to follow. I congratulate the Kathiawar States which have tried to introduce this reform and I trust the day is not distant when there will be not a single liquor shop in our peninsula.

Special Cases

I constantly receive complaints against particular States for publication and criticism in *Young India* and *Navajivan*, but I do not propose to refer to them just now, nor have I referred to them in those journals. I prefer to be silent so long as I am not in possession of all facts and have not heard what the States in question have to say. I hope to be enlightened about these things in the Subjects Committee and if then I find it proper to say or to do anything, I would certainly move in the matter.

Khadi and the Spinning-wheel

There are two items in which we can expect full co-operation from the Indian States. At one time our national economics was this that just as we produced our own corn and consumed it so did we produce our own cotton, spin it in our homes and wear the clothes woven by our weavers from our own yarn. The first part of this description is still true while the latter part has almost ceased to hold good. A man generally spends upon his clothing a tenth of what he spends upon his food; hence instead of distributing ten per cent of our income among ourselves we now send it to England or to our own mills. That means that we lose so much labour, and in the bargain spend money on our clothing and consequently suffer a twofold loss. The result is that we stint ourselves in the matter of food in order to be able to spend on clothing, and sink into greater and greater misery day by day. We are bound to perish if the twin industries of agriculture and spinning as well as weaving disappear from our homes or our villages. I will leave it to the members of the Conference to imagine what would be the consequence if all the villages under Bhavnagar were to order out their food and clothing from Bhavnagar. Still it is this unnatural procedure which we have adopted about our clothing. We either import our clothing from foreign countries or else get it from our mills. In either case it spells decay of our rural population.

Let us not be deluded by the example of the other countries which import their clothing from outside and still do not suffer economically. In other countries if people give up spinning and weaving they take to some still more remunerative industry

instead. We on the other hand gave up spinning and partly weaving and had nothing else to occupy the time thus left vacant.

For Kathiawar it is very easy to escape from the economic catastrophe. Our Princes can encourage the people by personal example, and induce them to reinstate khadi in their homes and thus arrest the progress of the ever-deepening poverty of Kathiawar. In my view the starting of mills and ginning factories in Kathiawar will not make for the people's prosperity, but will be in the nature of a disaster. It is not a healthy sign that the middle-class people are compelled to leave the peninsula in search of a livelihood. There is no harm if a few enterprising men leave Kathiawar in search of fortune; but it is shameful and disgraceful for the States that their subjects being reduced to poverty should feel compelled to leave the country from pure helplessness. Whenever I have returned to Kathiawar after staying outside for sometime I have found that the people have been losing instead of gaining in stamina.

Fortunately the arts of hand-spinning and hand-weaving are being revived day by day and the importance of khadi is being realized. Will not the Princes and Chiefs help this movement? It will reflect no small credit on them if they educate the cultivators to stock cotton sufficient for the requirements of Kathiawar, and spread the use of khadi by wearing it themselves. All khadi need not be coarse. The Princes by encouraging hand-spinning and hand-weaving can revive many arts and crafts connected with weaving. Royal ladies can spin fine yarn on wheels artistically painted and adorned with silver bells, get it woven into fine muslin and deck themselves with it. I have personally seen delicate varieties being woven in Kathiawar. That art has now nearly died out. Is it not the special duty of Princes to encourage such arts?

Untouchability

Another extremely important question is that of untouchability. The suppressed classes perhaps suffer more in Kathiawar than in other parts of Greater Gujarat. They are harassed even in railways. To succour the distressed is the special mission of Princes. They are the natural champions of the weak. Will they not come to the aid of the suppressed classes? Princes live by the blessings of their subjects. Will they not enrich their own lives by earning the blessings of the suppressed? The scriptures proclaim that there is no distinction between a Brahmin and a scavenger. Both have souls; both have five organs of sense. If they wish, the

Princes can do much to ameliorate the condition of these classes and can remove untouchability by association with them in a religious spirit. Let them found schools and sink wells for the suppressed and find a throne in their hearts.

Why I Have Criticized

I have not criticized the States for the sake of criticism. I know the Gandhi family has been connected with them for three generations. I have myself been witness to ministership in three States. I remember that the relations of my father and my uncle with their respective States were perfectly cordial. As I believe that I am not devoid of the sense of discrimination, I am anxious to see only the good points of the States. As I have already said I do not desire their destruction. I believe that the States can do much good to the people. And if I have embarked upon criticism it is in the interest of the Princes as well as of their subjects. My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God. Non-violence is the means of realizing Him. In passing criticisms I have endeavoured to state the truth and have been actuated purely by the spirit of non-violence or love. I pray that the Princes and Chiefs may understand and accept my remarks in the same spirit.

"Ramarajya"

My ideal of Indian States is that of *Ramarajya.* Rama taking his cue from a washerman's remark and in order to satisfy his subjects abandoned Sita who was dear to him as life itself and was a very incarnation of Purity[1]. Rama did justice even to a dog. By abandoning his kingdom and living in the forest for the sake of truth Rama gave to all the kings of the world an object-lesson in noble conduct. By his strict monogamy he showed that a life of perfect self-restraint could be led by a royal householder. He lent splendour to his throne by his popular administration and proved that *Ramarajya* was the acme of swaraj. Rama did not need the very imperfect modern instrument of ascertaining public opinion by counting votes. He had captivated the hearts of the people. He knew public opinion by intuition as it were. The subjects of Rama were supremely happy.

Such *Ramarajya* is possible even today. The race of Rama is not extinct. In modern times the first Caliphs may be said to have established *Ramarajya.* Abubaker and Hazrat Umar collected

[1] The source has "pity".

revenue running into crores and yet personally they were as good as fakirs. They received not a pie from the Public Treasury. They were ever watchful to see that the people got justice. It was their principle that one may not play false even with the enemy but must deal justly with him.

To the People

In my humble opinion I have done my duty by the Princes in saying a few words about them. A word now to the people: The popular saying, "As is the king, so are the people", is only a half truth. That is to say it is not more true than its converse, "As are the people so is the Prince". Where the subjects are watchful a Prince is entirely dependent upon them for his status. Where the subjects are overtaken by sleepy indifference, there is every possibility that the Prince will cease to function as a protector and become an oppressor instead. Those who are not wide awake have no right to blame their Prince. The Prince as well as the people are mostly creatures of circumstances. Enterprising Princes and peoples mould circumstances for their own benefit. Manliness consists in making circumstances subservient to ourselves. Those who will not heed themselves perish. To understand this principle is not to be impatient, not to reproach Fate, not to blame others. He who understands the doctrine of self-help blames himself for failure. It is on this ground that I object to violence. If we blame others when we should blame ourselves and wish for or bring about their destruction, that does not remove the root cause of the disease which on the contrary sinks all the deeper for the ignorance thereof.

Satyagraha

We then see that the people themselves are as responsible as and even more responsible than the Princes for the defects pointed out by me. If public opinion is opposed to a particular line of action, it should be impossible for the Prince to adopt it. Opposition here does not mean merely inaudible murmur. Public opposition is effective only where there is strength behind it. What does a son do when he objects to some action of his father? He requests the father to desist from the objectionable course, i.e., presents respectful petitions. If the father does not agree in spite of repeated prayers, he non-co-operates with him to the extent even of leaving the paternal roof. This is pure justice. Where father and son are uncivilized, they quarrel, abuse each other and often even come to blows. An obedient son is ever modest, ever

peaceful and ever loving. It is only his love which on due occasion compels him to non-co-operate. The father himself understands this loving non-co-operation. He cannot endure abandonment by or separation from the son, is distressed at heart and repents. Not that it always happens thus. But the son's duty of non-co-operation is clear.

Such non-co-operation is possible between a Prince and his people. In particular circumstances it may be the people's duty. Such circumstances can exist only where the latter are by nature fearless and are lovers of liberty. They generally appreciate the laws of the State and obey them voluntarily without the fear of punishment. Reasoned and willing obedience to the laws of the State is the first lesson in non-co-operation.

The second is that of tolerance. We must tolerate many laws of the State, even when they are inconvenient. A son may not approve of some orders of the father and yet he obeys them. It is only when they are unworthy of tolerance and immoral that he disobeys them. The father will at once understand such respectful disobedience. In the same way it is only when a people have proved their active loyalty by obeying the many laws of the State that they acquire the right of civil disobedience.

The third lesson is that of suffering. He who has not the capacity of suffering cannot non-co-operate. He who has not learnt to sacrifice his property and even his family when necessary can never non-co-operate. It is possible that a Prince enraged by non-co-operation will inflict all manner of punishments. There lies the test of love, patience, and strength. He who is not ready to undergo the fiery ordeal cannot non-co-operate. A whole people cannot be considered fit or ready for non-co-operation when only an individual or two have mastered these three lessons. A large number of the people must be thus prepared before they can non-co-operate. The result of hasty non-co-operation can only lead to harm. Some patriotic young men who do not understand the limitations noted by me grow impatient. Previous preparation is needed for non-co-operation as it is for all important things. A man cannot become a non-co-operator by merely wishing to be one. Discipline is obligatory. I do not know that many have undergone the needful discipline in any part of Kathiawar. And when the requisite discipline has been gone through probably non-co-operation will be found to be unnecessary.

As it is, I observe the necessity for individuals to prepare themselves in Kathiawar as well as in other parts of India. Individuals must cultivate the spirit of service, renunciation, truth, non-violence,

self-restraint, patience, etc. They must engage in constructive work in order to develop these qualities. Many reforms would be effected automatically if we put in a good deal of silent work among the people.

The Politicals

Kathiawar is famous for its political class. This class affects an exaggerated politeness and consequently it has developed hypocrisy, timidity and sycophancy. They are an educated body of men and therefore they must become the pioneers in reforms. They can do much for the people if they wish. We find contentment among the people in places where these political officials are men of character. Needless to say that my remarks apply to the politicals as a class. I do not wish to suggest that they apply to every member of that class. On the contrary, I know that some of the best of workers are drawn from this class. Hence I have never lost hope about this class. Much good might result if only it served the States not for making money but for pure service.

Other Classes

Again, constructive service is easy for those who not serving the States have adopted an independent profession. I am anxious to see them develop the qualities mentioned above. We want silent workers and pure fighters who would merge themselves among the people. Workers of this description can be counted on one's fingers. Is there even one such worker for every village in Kathiawar? I know the answer is in the negative. The class of people who will read this will hardly have any idea of rural life. Those who have some idea of it will not like it. Still, India and hence Kathiawar lives in the villages.

The Spinning-wheel

How is this service to be rendered? Here I give the first place to the spinning-wheel. I have heard much against it. But I know the time is near when the very thing which is being abused today will be worshipped as *sudarshana chakra.* I am confident that if we do not take it up voluntarily the force of circumstances will compel us. The study of Indian economics is the study of the spinning-wheel. It is the *sine qua non* for the revival of our languishing village industries. I do not look upon hand-spinning as an occupation but as a duty incumbent upon followers of all religious sects and denominations.

An American writer says that the future lies with nations that believe in manual labour. Nations are tired of the worship of

lifeless machines multiplied *ad infinitum*. We are destroying the matchless living machines, viz., our own bodies by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them. It is a law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilized. We dare not ignore it. The spinning-wheel is the auspicious symbol of *sharir yajna*—body labour. He who eats his food without offering this sacrifice steals it. By giving up this sacrifice we became traitors to the country and banged the door in the face of the Goddess of Fortune. The numerous men and women in India whose bodies are mere skeletons bear witness to this. My revered friend Mr. Shastriar says I am interfering even in the people's choice of their dress. This is perfectly true. It is the duty of every servant of the nation to do so whenever it becomes necessary. I would certainly raise my voice against it, if the nation takes, say, to the pantaloon. It is wholly unsuited to our climate. It is the duty of every Indian to raise his voice against the nation using foreign cloth. The opposition really is not to the cloth being foreign but to the poverty which its importation brings in its train. If the nation gives up its *jawar* and *bajri* and imports oats from Scotland or rye from Russia I would certainly intrude into the nation's kitchen, would scold it to the full and even sit *dharana* and make the agony of my soul heard. Such intrusions have even happened within recent times. During the late diabolical War in Europe people were compelled to raise particular crops, and the States controlled the food and drink of their subjects.

Those who wish to serve in the villages cannot but take up the study of the spinning-wheel. Hundreds and even thousands of young men and women can earn their livelihood by its means and doubly repay the nation for it. This work means organization and familiarity with every villager to whom one could easily impart a rudimentary knowledge of economics and politics. The work might also include the true education of the village children and give one an insight into the many wants and shortcomings of villages.

Not only is there no conflict possible between a Prince and his subjects in this khadi work but on the other hand their relations might be expected to become cordial. The fulfilment of this expectation is conditional on the workers' humility. I am therefore neither ashamed nor do I hesitate in asking this Political Conference to give prominence to the spinning-wheel.

The Suppressed Classes

Such also is the work among untouchables. It is the bounden duty of all Hindus to remove untouchability. Here also no inter-

ference need be feared from any Prince. I firmly believe that Hindus would regain the strength of soul if by serving the suppressed and receiving their hearts' blessing they carried on a process of self-purification. Untouchability is a great blot on Hinduism. It is necessary to remove that blot. The Hindu who serves the suppressed will be a saviour of Hinduism and will enshrine himself in the hearts of his suppressed brothers and sisters.

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. When the members of this Conference will prepare themselves by loving service, they will acquire the right to speak on behalf of the people and no Prince will be able to resist them. Then only is there an atmosphere for non-co-operation, if it ever becomes necessary.

But I have faith in the Princes. They will at once recognize the force of such enlightened and forceful public opinion. After all the Princes, too, are Indians. This country is all in all to them as it is to us. It is possible to touch their hearts. I for one do not think it difficult to make a successful appeal to their sense of justice. We have never made an earnest effort. We are in a hurry. In conscientiously preparing ourselves for service lies our victory, the victory of Princes as well as the people.

Hindu-Muslim Unity

The third question is that of Hindu-Muslim unity. I have one or two letters from Kathiawar which show that this question is exercising some minds even in Kathiawar. I need scarcely say that there must be unity between Hindus and Muslims. No worker dare ignore any single part of the nation.

My Field of Labour

I know that to many my speech will appear incomplete and even insipid. But I cannot give any practical or useful advice by going outside my province. My field of labour is clearly defined and it pleases me. I am fascinated by the law of love. It is the philosophers' stone for me. I know ahimsa alone can provide a remedy for our ills. In my view the path of non-violence is not the path of the timid or the unmanly. Ahimsa is the height of Kshatriya dharma as it represents the climax of fearlessness. In it there is no scope for flight or for defeat. Being a quality of the soul it is not difficult of attainment. It comes easily to a person who feels the presence of the soul within. I believe that no other path but that of non-violence will suit India. The symbol of that dharma

for India is the spinning-wheel as it alone is the friend of the distressed and the giver of plenty for the poor. The law of love knows no bounds of space or time. My swaraj, therefore, takes note of *Bhangis*, *Dheds*, *Dublas*[1] and the weakest of the weak, and except the spinning-wheel I know no other thing which befriends all these.

I have not discussed your local questions of which I have not sufficient knowledge. I have not dealt with the questions of the ideal constitution for the States as you alone can be its fashioners. My duty lies in discovering and employing means by which the nation may evolve the strength to enforce its will. When once the nation is conscious of its strength it will find its own way or make it. That Prince is acceptable to me who becomes a Prince among his people's servants. The subjects are the real masters. But what is the servant to do if the master goes to sleep? Everything, therefore, is included in trying for a true national awakening.

Such being my ideal there is room for Indian States in swaraj as conceived by me and there is full protection guaranteed to the subjects for their rights. The true source of rights is duty. I have therefore spoken only about the duties of Princes as well as the peoples. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If, leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them the farther will they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: "Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone."[2] Action is duty; fruit is the right.

Young India, 8-1-1925

424. OPENING SPEECH AT KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BHAVNAGAR

January 8, 1925

I have expressed in my address the great hesitation that I felt in accepting the chairmanship of this Conference. Man proposes and God disposes. I have felt the weight of this maxim many times in my life, as indeed all thoughtful men and women must have done.

I wanted to dwell in this Conference on only one subject of primary importance, but now fortunately I must dwell on two. The first, is, no doubt, khadi, than which nothing is dearer to me.

[1] A backward community in Gujarat

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 47

People think that I have a craze for the spinning-wheel and khadi. This is true. Only a lover can fully understand his beloved. Only he knows what true love means; and I, being the lover, alone know what my love is like and what flames of passion burn in my heart. I do not, however, wish to speak of them now.

This is a political conference; hence you would expect a discussion of political matters only. But my thoughts and feelings are those of a rustic, a peasant, a common man. Although I was born in a trading community—the Bania class—and my father and grandfather were connected with matters of State as well, I am no statesman; there is no trace of statesmanship or diplomacy in me; and if there is any, it is in spite of me. But I have another quality in me, which is not inherited but is entirely self-acquired, and that is the quality of being a peasant, a scavenger, a *Dhed*, the lowliest of the low. I cannot, therefore, define "politics" in your terms—as statesmanship. Being what I am, I cannot think of matters only concerning the State when taking up a "political" subject, for a farmer cannot look after his fields by making speeches—he can only do so by taking up his plough and not giving it up under the hottest sun. Similarly, a weaver can ply his trade by hard work alone. The common meaning of the word "political" is, however, making speeches, organizing agitations or movements and finding fault with the Government. But to me, the meaning of this word is quite different. Even during the twenty-two years of my stay abroad, I had given it a different definition. Yet, as things look enchanting from a distance, people have been mistaking me for a statesman or a politician. No doubt, I like politics too, but it is of a different kind. There is no place for scheming in it; it is full of love and understanding. In fact, love and affection are a thousand times more effective than political manœuvring; besides, the interests of everybody including those of the peasant, the scavenger and the pariah, can best be looked after through understanding and love. You know, I gave a similar definition of statesmanship before the Congress and I was not ashamed of it. It is from this point of view that I have included khadi among political matters. I claim my view to be wise and enlightened, and hope that some day you will also hail my advocacy of the spinning-wheel and khadi as shrewd, wise and enlightened. When people mock at me today and describe the spinning-wheel as Gandhi's toy, I pity them, and I am not going to give it up however much they laugh at me.

Now, to the next important subject. Ever since I was invited here and I wrote in *Navajivan* that, if a separate enclosure was

arranged for seating the untouchables in this conference, then my place would be among them,[1] a big outcry has been raised in Bhavnagar. I have seen with my own eyes how bad is the evil of untouchability in Kathiawar. My own revered mother thought it a sin to touch a *Bhangi*. She is no less dear to me on that account. But I don't want to follow in the footsteps of my parents in this matter.[2] I have inherited from them the spirit of freedom, and I am convinced that, even if I think differently from them on this subject, the soul of my mother will bless me all the same and will approve of my stand, for in none of the solemn vows she made me take was touching someone mentioned as a sin. Before I went to England, she took three promises from me, but she never asked me to adhere to untouchability as religious duty. I can quite see the little—or I should say perhaps, big—commotion in Bhavnagar; and the *Nagars*, the *Vanias* and others are upset. To such people who are present here and who really believe that Gandhi is out to uproot the *sanatana* dharma[3], I would like to say deliberately and emphatically that Gandhi has no such intention whatsoever; on the contrary, *sanatana* dharma is rooted in what Gandhi says. Some of you may be learned men who have learnt every word of the Vedas by heart; I would nevertheless like to point out their mistake and say that the very foundations of *sanatana* dharma are being shaken by people who consider untouchability to be the heart of Hindu religion. With due respect I would submit that such belief lacks foresight, wisdom, discrimination, humility or compassion. Even if I remain alone in my conviction, I must still proclaim to the very end that if we accommodate the present conception of untouchability in Hindu religion, it will surely lead to decay and bring about eventual death. To Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras I would say that the emancipation of India does not rest so much on the Muslims and the Christians as on how the Hindus themselves uphold their religion; for the Kashivishvanath[4] of the Muslim or the Christian is Mecca or Jerusalem outside India; but the Hindu must seek his salvation in this land alone and nowhere else. This is the land of Yudhishthira, of Ramachandra. Ascetics and sages have lived and practised austere penance here. They have called our country a field of duty and not a garden of pleasure. I tell the people of this land that Hindu religion is on test today,

[1] *Vide* pp. 408-9.

[2] The Gujarati idiom literally means: "I do not wish to drown myself in my ancestral well."

[3] Literally, the eternal dharma

[4] Banaras, the holy place of the Hindus

and it is being weighed against all the other religions of the world. If anything inconsistent with compassion, morality or reason is allowed to stay in the Hindu religion, then it will surely perish. I am fully aware of the virtue of compassion, and am therefore able to see what hypocrisy and ignorance is being practised under the cover of Hindu religion. This hypocrisy and ignorance I shall fight, alone if necessary. I shall do penance and may die in this struggle. But if perchance I lose my reason and in my insanity admit my present views on untouchability as wrong and say that I have sinned in describing untouchability as a blot on Hinduism, you may safely conclude then that irresistible fear has overtaken me and being afraid of the consequences I have denied my former belief. You must then regard me as one talking nonsense in a state of stupor.

There is no selfish motive in whatever I am saying today. I do not seek any position or prestige thereby. If at all I seek any position it is that of a *Bhangi*. Cleansing of dirt is sacred work which can be done by a Brahmin as well as a *Bhangi*, the former doing it with and the latter without the knowledge of its holiness. I respect and honour both of them. In the absence of either of the two, Hinduism is bound to face extinction.

I like the path of service; therefore, I like the *Bhangi*. I have personally no objection to sharing my meal with him, but I am not asking you to inter-dine with or intermarry him. How can I advise you? As far as I am concerned I am a fakir, who has given up the world, a sannyasi who is not bound by social customs, though how much of a true fakir or sannyasi I am, I cannot say. But I do like renouncing the world and its ways. I also like *brahmacharya*, though how much of a true *brahmachari* I am, I cannot also say, for according to me anyone who has unchaste thoughts or dreams cannot be called a *brahmachari*. If I utter one word of anger, do anything out of malice or jealousy, say anything in fury even to someone who considers himself my deadliest enemy, I cannot call myself a *brahmachari*. Therefore I do not know whether I am a true sannyasi or *brahmachari*; but I can assert that my life and my thoughts tend towards that state. With this ingrained trait in my character, I cannot refuse to serve a *Bhangi* girl or a leper when my help is sought or needed, nor can I refuse to accept a drink or meal proffered by them. God may protect me or kill me, but serve a leper I must. I may even say that, while engaged in such service, I would be entirely unconcerned whether or not God protected me. I regard it my sacred duty to eat only after making the pariah or the leper eat. But I am not asking you

to violate any social barriers as regards eating and drinking. I expect only one thing from you, namely, that you should not create a fifth caste. God has cast men in a fourfold structure of society. I can understand that; but please do not create a fifth caste of untouchables. I cannot tolerate untouchability and am much pained to hear that word. I would request those who oppose me to think carefully, to come to me and understand through discussion what I am talking about. If you talk recklessly and thoughtlessly; you are not going to convince anyone thereby. I have received today a telegram signed by two pandits. I do not know these gentlemen; they write to say that the accusations heaped on me in the name of Hinduism and in the name of the pandits are baseless, that they are going to send me such messages signed by the learned men of their class that shall prove that many shastris support me. They also plead their inability to work as vigorously as I do in this field, for they say that I am fearless whereas they have to weigh many considerations. When Shri Krishna went to Dronacharya and Bhishmacharya and asked them if they were going to fight the Pandavas, the two elders expressed their helplessness since, they said, they had to think of their livelihood. We have many such Dronacharyas and Bhishmacharyas among us who, poor people, have to think of their stomachs first. They are in no position to do anything. The fault lies with Providence or their circumstances. Even so, they bless me in their heart of hearts and know that whatever Gandhi says is true. But here I must also add one more thing. I am a satyagrahi; my creed ordains me not to kill anyone but to lay down my own life. I shall have to go my own way. I have, therefore, a request to make to you. If you sincerely believe that untouchability is the very core of Hinduism, then stick to it; but give me also my right to my belief that it is a disgrace to Hinduism. You may, if you can, rouse the Hindu world in your favour; but give me also an equal opportunity to do likewise. For a satyagrahi there is only one path to follow: he does not seek alliances or compromises with others. I shall therefore assure you that in my dealings with you, I shall always be guided by love. If I am left alone, I shall segregate myself and ask people to keep away from me.

To those who are assisting me in my work of removing untouchability, and to the so-called untouchables, I would counsel forbearance even against abuse. Tulsidas has said that compassion is the very source of religion. If you forsake love, you shall lose the battle. They who regard untouchability as sin, must not sin themselves by hating their opponents. Turn a smiling face even

to those who abuse you. If you love them from the depth of your heart, and maintain the right attitude and behaviour, the sin of untouchability is bound to be eradicated.

I fail, however, to understand this opposition in Kathiawar. Kathiawar is the land of Sudama, of Shri Krishna and Aniruddha. Where should I go if untouchability finds a place in the land where warriors have shed their blood? However, the *Bhangis* tell me that the conditions here are worse than in any other part of Gujarat. I am pained to hear this.

Who is Narandas Sanghani but a son to me? Once he used to follow me blindly and delighted in serving me. He gave all his library to me. But God has now induced ill will in him. However, he is still like a son to me. I believe that his mischief will not last long and that his vows will never be fulfilled. Even if God wishes it otherwise, and Sanghani raises his hand to attack me, I shall ask him to please himself and bless him. Prahlad disobeyed his father since, he said, the father was leading him towards the path of sin and he was not bound by the father's orders. If Narandas still believes that he is like the eldest son to me and yet he wishes to do away with me because I have gone astray, he should certainly strike me. I am sure his eyes will open when he has done so, and he will then come to you with downcast head to atone for his sin. He is just a child, he is young, whereas I have grown old. Many people have raised their hand against me, but I have survived. Once I had appendicitis and I was operated upon. During the operation the lamp went off and Col. Maddock was greatly distressed. But God wanted to save me and here I am with no harm done! There is a story in the Upanishads that Vayu[1] was asked to move a blade of grass, and Agni[2] to burn it; but they had to run away after admitting failure. So, if God does not wish me to die, who can kill me? And if my days are over, I may pass away without anyone's knowledge just as I am talking to you now or sitting comfortably and no one could do anything about it too! I have had some experience of the world and acquired some knowledge of things. I am therefore asking you to believe me and have pity on Narandas. I do not seek your pity for myself, for I depend only on God for compassion. I demand a true soldier's pledge from you. Once you take the pledge, I would insist that you fulfil it. If you take a pledge without giving serious thought to it, you will find me a difficult

[1] God of wind
[2] God of fire

man. I shall see that you honour your pledge. So think carefully before you come here again tomorrow.

I wanted to speak to you for thirty minutes, but have actually taken up thirty-five minutes of your time. I had no right over these additional five minutes, but I know that you have allowed me this indulgence and I have availed myself of it through your goodwill for *Bhangis*.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan Supplement, 18-1-1925

425. CONCLUDING SPEECH AT KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BHAVNAGAR

[January 9, 1925][1]

The following is a substance of Mr. Gandhi's concluding speech at the Kathiawar Political Conference:

Whenever I have come to Kathiawar I have been covered with overflowing love. It is no wonder when I know that everywhere in India I find Kathiawar, i.e., the overwhelming love of Kathiawar. Much as I prize that love, I crave for that "love amazing, love divine", which nourishes the soul, and not the love which, not being backed by the will to perform promises made, withers the soul. It is service of the people that connects you and me, and not circumstances of a private nature. Unless, therefore, you give all your love practical shape, turn it into work of public benefit, it has, for me at least, no meaning. I am an ordinary mortal, as much exposed to affections and passions as anyone of you. But I always try to control them. I therefore demand love which soothes but does not overwhelm. I want the fire of that love to purify and not to burn me. Let all your love therefore be converted into work in fulfilment of the national programme.

I am grateful to you for allowing me to exercise the fullest discretion as regards the resolutions you had drafted for consideration before the Subjects Committee. Your draft contained a long list of grievances. I asked you to restrain the desire for passing resolutions regarding grievances and to cultivate self-discipline and the capacity of suffering. You accepted my advice, not out of regard for my personality, but because you know that I am a practical man and have some experience of public affairs. In

[1] From the *Navajivan* Supplement, 18-1-1925, which carried the report of the Gujarati speech

advising you however to drop most of your resolutions, I did not mean to muzzle myself too on the matters referred to therein. I have taken up greater responsibility on my shoulders. I do not want to go to sleep, because you have waived all discussion of your grievances. It shall be, for me, a year of intense, unremitting toil.

But I shall work on my condition. The advice I have given you is based on trust, trust in human nature, trust in the Kathiawar Chiefs. Even so at Amritsar I pleaded[1] with my brother-delegates not to distrust Mr. Montagu, not to distrust Lord Sinha's judgment, not to distrust His Majesty the King, and you know that the Congress accepted my advice to a considerable extent. You must remember that against me was ranged that day no less an opponent than the late Lokamanya Tilak. But he and the others saw that I was suggesting the proper thing and accepted my suggestion. I pleaded with them somewhat in this wise: "Accept the Reforms today, as given in good faith. The moment you feel that they are more a burden than a blessing, you may reject them. For Mr. Montagu says that he has tried to secure all that he could for us. Lord Sinha, a man in the know and a distinguished patriot, has also advised the country to accept the Reforms." The King's message too was couched in graceful language. All those considerations led me to suggest acceptance of the Reforms. Out of that state of trust, when it was proved to be misplaced, arose non-co-operation. Today too I am asking you to adopt a policy of trust. But pray do not press the parallel too far. It is meant only to assure you that I do not want to sit silent. I have heard more tales of woe than you have told me. I do not know how much of all I have heard is true. But you may be sure that as soon as I am convinced that the complaints are true, I shall use whatever ability and resourcefulness I possess to get them remedied. I shall try to see the Princes concerned. If I succeed in getting a hearing from them, I shall discuss all your grievances with them, and shall, if permitted, acquaint the public with the result. Mussalman friends from Dhoraji had a series of grievances against the Thakore Sahib of Gondal. They asked to be permitted to place them before the Conference. But I dissuaded them, as I was not in possession of the facts. I have the honour to know the Thakore Sahib of Gondal. I have had the pleasure of meeting him. I regard him with respect, and I know that he is a capable ruler. It is therefore unbearable that he should mean or do any harm to his subjects. How can I indict him at the instance of half a

[1] *Vide* Vol. XVI, pp. 363-7.

dozen or more people? So long as I have not seen him or not spoken to the subordinate officers concerned, it would not be possible for me to give any definite lead. It would be against my nature to do so. I therefore assured the friends from Dhoraji that I would inquire into all their charges, and then do the needful. It was an awkward situation, my having to advise the Mussalman friends who might not trust me and know that I make no distinction between a Hindu and a Mussalman. But Maulana Shaukat Ali's arrival has fortified me. I told them that the Maulana and I would both consider over the matter, and give them our joint advice. I am glad to say that they agreed to this.

Jamnagar is in the same position as Gondal. I have numerous complaints against the ruler of that State also. If a subject may claim friendship with a ruling Prince, I may say that Jamsahib and I were friends in our youth. The late Kevalram Mavji Dave gave me a note of introduction to Jamsahib when I went to England. Very often we used to meet each other there, and the wish was dearest to the hearts of every one of us, his friends, that he should succeed to the gadi of Jamnagar. But today I hear numerous charges against him, none of which I wish may be true. I also wish that Jamsahib should of his own accord remedy all the wrongs (if any) that may have been committed against his subjects by him or in his name. It is not my purpose to embarrass him. I should approach him in all humility and plead with him. I should do the same with my bitterest opponent. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, for instance, thinks I am the wickedest man on earth. If he were to return to India as the King's representative, I would not hesitate to approach him, if need be, in all humility. Why should I do otherwise with Jamsahib? I have a huge pile of material before me aspersing both him and the Thakore Sahib of Gondal. But how can I make use of it, how can I criticize them, without inquiry? But I am not going to ignore or suppress any of the charges or complaints. I shall, during the current year, try my best to get them investigated and shall submit to you a day-to-day diary of my work at the close of the year.

A word now for your part of the bargain. I ask you not to disturb the task I have undertaken, by private or public criticism of a bitter or rancorous nature. I ask you not to irritate the Princes. They are, after all, rulers and are therefore like all men in authority. Authority blurs the vision. We cannot have Rama in every age, nor Umar. None of the Caliphs who came after the glorious thirty years of the Caliphate could ever approach anyone of the first four Caliphs. Such rulers are rare even as the gems

embedded in the most hidden recesses of mines. Wherever, therefore, I find a ruler getting irritated or angry I am patient with him. For anger is natural to them as much as to you or me if we were similarly placed. Kings are no more philosophers or saints than anyone of us. The world knows only one Janaka Videhi. Even under swaraj we shall have to put up with a fair amount of failings of the swaraj officials. Why only an hour ago perhaps I gave you a foretaste of how a man in authority behaves. How can I say that I did not in any instance abuse my authority? A shastri and a *muni* asked for permission to speak; I did not give it, I told the *muni*: "No more this wordy warfare for you. Your business is to go about from place to place introducing charkhas in every home." How do I know that I did not exceed the bounds of propriety in thus disallowing both? But I was clothed in authority, however brief, and so you put up with me. Wherever there is the use of authority there is scope for anger and injustice and we must needs drink many a bitter cup at the hands of rulers.

I have thus presented to you two sides of the case, one for the rulers and the other for the ruled. It is unbearable for me that a Kathiawar Prince should do wrong to his subjects. To him I say: "For what earthly use do you behave thus?" To you I say: "You must learn lessons of forbearance and self-suffering." I commend to your attention the last paragraph of my printed Presidential address. I would ask you to read and read that paragraph and to chew and digest it. No people have risen who thought only of rights. Only those did so who thought of duties. Out of the performance of duties flow rights, and those that knew and performed their duties came naturally by the rights. The Shastras inculcate reverence to parents. It means implicit obedience to them, and why do we willingly obey like that? We know that an angry look from his mother was sufficient to make the giant-like Shaukat Ali cower before her. What is the secret of this willing obedience? It is that the obedience carries with it enjoyment of a right—the right to inheritance. At the back of obedience is a consciousness of a right to be enjoyed, and yet woe to the man who obeys with an eye to the right to inheritance. It is the Shastras again that inculcate obedience without an eye to the fruit thereof. He who thinks not of the right gets it, and he who thinks of it loses it. That is the rule of conduct I would like to place before you. If you follow it I have no doubt that you will create a disciplined army of workers for swaraj. After you have succeeded in raising such an army, no ruler dare ignore you. As it is, the gentleman who invited the next conference to Sorath did so with

considerable trepidation, lest a ruler should refuse permission to hold it. You have therefore to clear the atmosphere, and to raise your moral stature to such a degree that no one would want to refuse your request. I hope you will not misunderstand me. I am not asking you to do aught that you should not do, that may be calculated to injure your self-respect. Always insist on truth, and urge it with humility and grace. I am a journalist of long standing. In my own way I claim to know my art well. For I make it a point to write only one thing when there are a hundred things that I might write. Now if I were to open the columns of *Young India* and *Navajivan* to all the controversial topics and complaints that are referred to me, that would be the surest way to lose the little reputation I have gained for these journals. And punctilious though I am in the observance of this rule, I dare say I err on occasions. I would therefore ask such of you as are journalists and publicists to curb your pen and tongue. Exercise the strictest economy of words, but not of truth. Restrain your expression, but not the inner light which should burn brighter with increasing restraint. Nor will you thus fall a prey to weakness. Flattery and anger are the two sides of weakness, one the obverse, other the reverse. The reverse—anger—is worse than the obverse—flattery. Only a weak man either resorts to flattery or tries to disguise his weakness under anger. Let no one flatter himself that his anger is an expression of his strength. Strength lies only in action and action is duty done. Those who have captivated the hearts of men are souls heroic and true, who have burnt their passions to cinders in the fire of restraint. For you also, therefore, who have the salvation of Kathiawar at heart, patience and restraint should be the watchwords. The king carries on his work by means of punitive sanctions. You will carry on your work with the sanction of sacrifice and love. Drench both the rulers and ruled with the water of your sacrifice and love, so that you may convert Kathiawar into an Eden worthy for men and gods to behold. If I may bless you, that is my blessing. If I am not worthy to give you blessings, that is my prayer to God. Let the spinning-wheel be a symbol of your sacrifice and love for fellow-men.

Young India, 15-1-1925

426. SPEECH AT SAMALDAS COLLEGE, BHAVNAGAR[1]

January 9, 1925

I have to speak today on the dharma or duty of students. That dharma is as easy as it is difficult. According to Hinduism, the student is a *brahmachari*, and *brahmacharyashrama* is the student-state. Celibacy is a narrow interpretation of *brahmacharya*. The original meaning is the life or the state of a student. That means control of the senses, but the whole period of study or acquirement of knowledge by means of control of the senses came to be regarded as *brahmacharyashrama*. This period of life necessarily means very much taking and very little giving. We are mainly recipients in this state—taking whatever we can get from parents, teachers and from the world. But the taking, if it carries —as it did—no obligation of simultaneous repayment, it necessarily carried an obligation to repay the whole debt, with compound interest, at the proper time. That is why the Hindus maintain *brahmacharyashrama* as a matter of religious duty.

The [lives] of a *brahmachari* and a sannyasi are regarded as spiritually similar. The *brahmachari* must needs be a sannyasi if he is to be a *brah nachari*. For the sannyasi it is a matter of choice. The four ashramas of Hinduism have nowadays lost their sacred character, and exist, if at all, in name. The life of the student *brahmachari* is poisoned at the very spring. Though there is nothing left of the ashramas today which we may hold up to the present generation as something to learn from and copy, we may still hark back to the ideals that inspired the original ashramas.

How can we understand the duty of students today? We have fallen so much from the ideal. The parents take the lead in giving the wrong direction. They feel that their children should be educated only in order that they may earn wealth and position. Education and knowledge are thus being prostituted, and we look in vain for the peace, innocence and bliss that the life of a student ought to be. Our students are weighed down with cares and worries when they should really be "careful for nothing". They have simply to receive and to assimilate. They should know

[1] Published under the title "The Duty of Students", this is a summary of Gandhiji's speech in Gujarati reported in *Navajivan*, 18-1-1925.

only to discriminate between what should be received and what rejected. It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils discrimination. If we go on taking in indiscriminately, we would be no better than machines. We are thinking, knowing beings and we must in this period distinguish truth from untruth, sweet from bitter language, clean from unclean things and so on. But the student's path today is strewn with more difficulties than the one of distinguishing good from bad things. He has to fight the hostile atmosphere around him. Instead of the sacred surroundings of a *rishi* guru's ashram and his paternal care, he has the atmosphere of a broken-down home, and the artificial surroundings created by the modern system of education. The *rishis* taught their pupils without books. They only gave them a few *mantras* which the pupils treasured in their memories and translated in practical life. The present-day student has to live in the midst of heaps of books, sufficient to choke him. In my own days Reynolds was much in vogue among students and I escaped him only because I was far from being a brilliant student and never cared to peep out of the school text-books. When I went to England, however, I saw that these novels were tabooed in decent circles and that I had lost nothing by having never read them. Similarly there are many other things which a student might do worse than reject. One such thing is the craze for earning a career. Only the *grihastha*—householder—has to think of it, it is none of the *brahmachari* student's dharma. He has to acquaint himself with the condition of things in his own country, try to realize the magnitude of the crisis with which it is faced and the work that it requires of him. I dare say many amongst you read newspapers. I do not think I can ask you to eschew them altogether. But I would ask you to eschew everything of ephemeral interest, and I can tell you that newspapers afford nothing of permanent interest. They offer nothing to help the formation of character. And yet I know the craze for newspapers. It is pitiable, terrible. I am talking in this strain as I have myself made some experiments in education. Out of those experiments I learnt the meaning of education, I discovered satyagraha and non-co-operation and launched on those new experiments. I assure you I have never regretted having tried these last, nor have I undertaken them simply with the object of winning political swaraj. I have ventured to place them even before students. For they are innocent. They are today summed up in the spinning-wheel. First it was hailed with ridicule, then came scorn, and presently it will be received with joy. The Congress has adopted it,

and I would not hesitate to offer it respectfully even to Lord Reading. I would not hesitate to do so, as I know that I would lose nothing in so doing. The loser would be Lord Reading if he chose to reject it. I did not hesitate to deliver the message of the wheel to the Bishop of Calcutta when I had the honour to make his acquaintance in Delhi. I did the same with Col. Maddock, and when Mrs. Maddock sailed for England I presented her with a khaddar towel as a memento, and asked her to carry the message from house to house.

I am not tired of preaching the message of the wheel on all occasions at all hours, because it is such an innocent thing, and yet so potent of good. It may not be relishing, but no health-giving food has the relish of spicy foods so detrimental to health. And so the *Gita* in a memorable text asks all thinking people to take things of which the first taste is bitter, but which are ultimately conducive to immortality. Such a thing today is the spinning-wheel and its product. There is no *yajna* (sacrifice) greater than spinning, calculated to bring peace to the troubled spirit, to soothe the distracted student's mind, to spiritualize his life. I have today no better prescription for the country—not even the *Gayatri*—in this practical age which looks for immediate results. *Gayatri* I would fain offer, but I cannot promise immediate result, whilst the thing I offer is such as you can take to, with God's name on your lips, and expect immediate result. An English friend wrote saying his English common sense told him that spinning was an excellent hobby. I said to him, "It may be a hobby for you, for us it is the Tree of Plenty." I do not like many Western ways, but there are certain things in them for which I cannot disguise my liking. Their "hobby" is a thing full of meaning. Col. Maddock, who was an efficient surgeon and took supreme delight in his task, did not devote all his hours to his work. Two hours he had set apart for his hobby which was gardening and it was this gardening that lent zest and savour to his life.

I have pleasure therefore in placing the spinning-wheel before you, even as a hobby if you will, in order that your life may have zest and savour, in order that you may find peace and bliss. It will help you to lead a life of *brahmacharya*. Faith is a thing of great moment in the student state. There are so many things which you have to take for granted. You accept them simply because you get them from your teacher. Some propositions in geometry, for instance, were very difficult of comprehension for me. I took them for granted, and today I not only can understand them, but can lose myself in a study of geometry as easily as I can do in my

present work. If you have faith, and ply the wheel, you take it from me that some day you will admit that what an old man once told you about it was literally true. No wonder that one learned in the lore applied the following text from the *Gita* to the spinning-wheel:

> In this there is no waste of effort; neither is there any obstacle. Even a little practice of this dharma saves a man from dire calamity.[1]

Young India, 29-1-1925

427. TO SALESMEN OF SWARAJ

It seems that even now the change in voting rights appears terrible to many. This does not surprise me. We are often troubled by a new thing; sometimes it produces fear. I hope that, as time goes by, fear will disappear and people will realize the value of the spinning franchise. In order to help such appreciation, it is necessary that those who have faith in the spinning-wheel should prove it by their persistence in it. Without waiting for orders from the Provincial Committee, those who are already spinning should do it more regularly and those who are not doing should start doing it. As hanks measuring two thousand yards are ready, people should hand them over to the Provincial Committees and get their names registered. This must not wait for a notice from the Provincial Committee.

Those who spin should also start persuading others to do so.

What is true of spinning applies also to khadi which needs a great deal of propaganda. In my journey through Dohad and Godhra I found that very few people have taken to khadi as yet. Of those who do wear it, one hears that many do so only at public gatherings. This is no way to boycott foreign cloth. I found very little khadi among women. I would specially request volunteers in Dohad and Godhra to go from door to door and explain the necessity of using khadi and the duty to spin.

We are in the same position as the trader who day and night plans for an increase in his business. We are the salesmen of swaraj. We are aware that the business of swaraj will thrive only if the boycott of foreign cloth is successful.

Each volunteer should understand his own responsibility. Each one should maintain a diary. At the end of the day one should ask oneself the following questions and note down the answers:

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 40

1. How many yards of yarn have I spun today?
2. How many people today did I persuade to adopt spinning?
3. How many people did I persuade today to *adopt khadi*?

He who regularly gives truthful answers in his diary will soon find that his capacity for work grows constantly. Every individual has some self-respect and no one likes to record failures for ever. Hence, an honest person overcomes his failures and achieves victory. A good businessman keeps a diary and derives invaluable benefit from it. It is obligatory for the captain of a ship to maintain a log-book. Why should not the salesmen of swaraj do likewise? If a despondent people wish to regain hope, the Congress has shown the royal road to it. If we give up idleness and become industrious, we shall get results immediately. This is no time for criticism, no time for doubts. This is the time only to work silently, that is, to spin, to make others spin, to wear khadi and to make others wear it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-1-1925

428. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Posh Vad 2 [January 12, 1925][1]

I remembered you and Anand during my Kathiawar tour. Wished you were with me, and good health for Anand. I shall await your letter on reaching the Ashram. Tell Anand that I think of her daily.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 79

[1] As given in the source

429. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Monday [January 12, 1925][1]

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I shall reach there[2] at 3 o'clock tomorrow, Tuesday. I shall directly go to Babusahib Yashwantprasad's. He had been to me yesterday and pressed me to put up with him. I hope you will see me there.

Will you be coming to Sojitra? If not, do come as far as Dhola or some such place so that we may be able to talk about the future.

I wish to know what arrangements have been made about [the cotton] that has been collected. We shall have good results if we make careful arrangements about the smallest things. Here also cotton is being collected.

Pattani Sahib has kept up spinning.

I will need my list of a hundred names. This year you are not to do any other work. You must obtain all the help you can from the States for the *Antyajas* from wherever you can.

More when we meet.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 5716

430. SPEECH AT GUJARAT PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE, AHMEDABAD

January 14, 1925

A meeting of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee was held this evening to formulate a scheme in accordance with the new constitution of the Congress. Mr. Gandhi, who was present, suggested that they should begin enlisting members to the Congress. They should say who would spin themselves and who would give yarn spun by others. They should also say how

[1] Gandhiji left Trapaj on the 12th for Bhavnagar on his way to Ahmedabad and thence proceeded to Sojitra on the 16th. From the reference to Prabhashanker Pattani's spinning it appears that the letter was written at Trapaj.

[2] Bhavnagar

many members they would enlist for the Congress. Mr. Gandhi himself promised to spin and enlist 100 members from Kathiawar. A remark was made that he should collect two lakhs of members from India. Mr. Gandhi replied that he would give the surplus to them. On the whole 74 members promised to spin, three promised to give yarn spun by others, and the total number of members promised to be collected was 1,700. Mr. Gandhi then suggested that over and above these members who would spin or give yarn, there might be many more who would spin for half an hour daily if they were given cotton. He wanted that cotton should be collected. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel promised to collect 500 maunds of cotton and Mr. Abbas Tyabji promised to collect 25 maunds.

The Bombay Chronicle, 15-1-1925

431. *CONVOCATION ADDRESS AT GUJARAT VIDYAPITH, AHMEDABAD*

January 14, 1925

STUDENTS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I congratulate you, students, who have received degrees today and hope that you will fulfil the vow that you have taken. Normally, on such an occasion, an institution reports progress in the numbers of students and teachers and in other respects. You must have seen from the report which the registrar read today that during the last four years the number of students has gradually been going down. Ordinarily this would cause disappointment. I am not disappointed, though I would admit that if it had been possible for us to show an increase in the number of students or some other progress by commonly accepted standards, I would have been pleased. I cannot say that the present position of the institution pleases me, but I am also not disappointed. It is true I and many others with me had hoped that we would need to run this institution only for a year and that after the attainment of swaraj at the close of this period you would go back to your schools and colleges which you had left at the call of the country. But four years instead of one have already passed and it is not yet possible to say how long we must still remain in banishment. I have now come to believe that even after we secure swaraj many such institutions would continue to work independently of the Government. The only difference then would be that unlike today these institutions would not have to compete with Government schools and colleges and the latter would not be

regarded as belonging to the opposite camp and therefore fit to be boycotted. But then also such experiments would certainly continue and there would be a place for institutions like ours. I hope, therefore, that the students who are studying here will not give way to disappointment nor think of the period they have been here as wasted.

This morning itself, when I reached the Ashram,[1] there was a postcard waiting for me. It contained accusations against this institution. The communication was anonymous. I have very often commented in *Navajivan* that no one should write an anonymous letter. It is shameful, cowardly in a way. We should give up this tendency. If we do not have the courage to proclaim our ideas to the world, it is better that we forget them, bury them. However, this tendency prevailed in this country for many years and, maybe, exists even now. I did, therefore, read the anonymous communication. It says: "Why don't you close this institution? Why don't you open your eyes? You have misguided the students. Many students are returning to Government schools after deserting this institution. Whatever you think, the students have not the least faith in the charkha. Therefore, you should close the Vidyapith and all affiliated institutions." I do not accept this advice, and I wish that you too should not accept it. No new institution can be judged on the basis of funds spent on it or the number of men working for it. If we calculate on this basis, we may be misled. A process of self-purification is under way in this country—we look upon non-co-operation as self-purification—and it would be wrong to expect that the number of students with us must increase. It is good if it grows, but we should retain our faith even if it does not grow, and we must continue to serve this institution as long as we have the faith.

I would indeed be sorry if it is a fact that the students have no faith in the charkha. Those who have no faith in the charkha must unhesitatingly leave the institution. You must remember the resolution which the Congress has passed about national institutions. I shall remind you of it here. No one present on the occasion opposed the definition of a national institution incorporated in the resolution. If the opposition was kept hidden in the mind but not expressed, it would bring discredit to me, to them, and to the country. How can I believe that the consent given by so many intelligent, free and mature men was not sincere? I would, therefore, say that the definition was acceptable to thou-

[1] Gandhiji had returned to Sabarmati from Bhavnagar in the morning.

sands. Recently the Kathiawar Conference has also accepted the definition. What is that definition?

A national school to be classed as such must fulfil the following conditions: Spinning must have a place in the daily routine. Teachers and students must spin daily for half an hour and should wear only hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. The medium of instruction should be either the mother tongue or Hindustani. *Vyayam*, that is, physical training including the art of self-defence, should be given due importance. The school should endeavour to unite the hearts of Hindus and Muslims. It should in no circumstances close its doors to the untouchables. This definition of a national school has been laid down by the Congress. Therefore, when I say that those who have no faith in the charkha should leave the Vidyapith and other institutions working under it, do not please think that I am excessively harsh. This is the only way in which we can progress. It will show us where we are going and how many men, women and students are with us.

My attention was drawn to certain criticisms of an article in *Sabarmati*[1]. Some of them are baseless because I have never entertained the ideas I am accused of. I have never said that the students should ply the charkha all the day; not that I have never thought of it. If I could persuade students and other countrymen that this would be most helpful to the country, I would indeed ask all people to spin for the whole day. But I cannot persuade the country today nor can I myself do it. If I can spin all the time, I would advise the students and the country to do likewise. My ambition is to be able to proclaim to India that real learning consists in spinning round the clock. In a way, if you select any pure activity and concentrate thereon, it will lead to real learning because it is a way of performing yoga. I won't speak of this here. I would merely ask the students to ply the charkha with faith and joy, spin fine yarn, and learn all the processes of charkha. You should have the same love and keenness for spinning as you have for other subjects. I would not grudge your giving all other time to the other subjects. But when you spin, do it with all your heart and not in a perfunctory way.

The other charge is about a certain remark of mine that the Vidyapith should make a scheme for a syllabus which would provide you with a livelihood after graduation. I say this even now. But this is not and should not be the principal aim before the

[1] A Gujarati bi-monthly published by the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, affiliated to the Gujarat Vidyapith

Vidyapith or before you. If learning becomes merely a means of earning, it will lead to your degradation. The Vidyapith has defined learning as that which leads to liberation. Therefore, it would be wrong, in this idealistic institution, to learn merely for the sake of earning. There are many ways for earning. Learning is intended to improve the body, mind and soul. He has acquired real learning whose body is well built and strong, who can endure extreme heat and cold, who has a strong will, who is self-restrained and pure, whose soul is so pure that he can claim to listen to the beatings of his own heart, and since the seat of the soul is in the heart, his heart must also be pure. Why should one who has acquired this triple learning worry about earning one's livelihood? One should have the faith that He who has given teeth will provide the crumbs. I am being told that the students have to run a household and feed many mouths. It may be so; a family should be maintained and it needs courage to do so. But while acquiring the learning described above, we also secure the ability to earn our livelihood. Livelihood cannot be secured by searching. One who looks upon learning as a mere means of livelihood does not secure even that. The Vidyapith is making provision for livelihood even now. It would be rendering you an invalid if it secures you a salary of Rs. 300 or Rs. 30 immediately on your graduation and issues such a letter to you. If such provision is made, it will sap your patriotism and your self-confidence. The Vidyapith gives you the strength to face difficulties and find a way out of them. The Vidyapith, in fact, can give you nothing, it can merely bring out what is hidden in you. You should therefore convince yourself that you have lost and are likely to lose nothing by coming to the Vidyapith.

The registrar has asked me to make suggestions about the future development of the Vidyapith. But I am able to make no such suggestions. I do not know what changes may occur in the situation in India this year. I am full of hopes, and will remain so till I die. But I cannot tell you just now what those hopes are; that would not be advisable. To the students, I would only say this: You should not bother about what happens to the Vidyapith. It is enough for you to know that your being here in this institution is the right thing for you, and going to a Government school or college would have been wrong, seeing that as things stand you would not have received there the kind of education that you should. As long as you believe that India did not get what she should have from Government institutions—and there is no likelihood of her doing so till she shakes off the foreign bon-

dage—the Vidyapith is the right place for you and you must not think of leaving it. But if you feel that you can get all that you want from Government institutions, you had better go there. And in that case there can be no reason whatever for you to worry about the future of the Vidyapith.

You must banish from your mind the thought of Government schools, and no student here should feel any attraction for them. As long as this attraction lasts you will continue to compare the Vidyapith with them. You will say to yourself: "There are so many facilities there while here there are few." That there are few facilities here is the distinguishing mark of the Vidyapith. How shall we learn to overcome difficulties if we create those same facilities here also? Or, to put it in another way, the very lack of these facilities is the facility offered to you at this place. There can be no comparison between the Vidyapith and the Government schools. Once you grasp this truth and have it fixed in your mind, there will be no need for you to worry about the future of the Vidyapith. It should be enough for you to be able to say that you have rendered your best help in the struggle for freedom by doing your duty. You and I have no right to know more than that. I know only this that the Vidyapith will exist only as long as it is helpful in the struggle for freedom; when it ceases to be so it will destroy itself. And what is wrong in its being destroyed in that case? The future of Indian swaraj is the future of the Vidyapith.

Whatever is pleasant is not always beneficial. Even now when I have grown old I know that everything that pleases me does not prove beneficial to me. We do therefore consult elders on many occasions. It is for this reason again that we have the ancient tradition of finding out a guru and seeking his shelter and support. A student used to prostrate himself before the guru and entreat him to guide his steps and stuff his brain with anything that he chose. These days an all-round guru is not available and the question of complete surrender does not arise. However, you need here the assurance that the teachers are leading you along the right path and not otherwise. Many things are bitter in the beginning but beneficial in the long run. With this faith you should swallow a bitter pill. This is my advice as well as prayer to you.

I wish to come back to the vow that you have taken. You have also listened to the prayer read by our brother, Athavale[1].

[1] R. B. Athavale, professor of Sanskrit in the Gujarat Vidyapith

Both these things looked very common. But we cannot see the power latent in common things. When an artist displays a trivial painting in a hall we praise it because it is the fashion. But no one ever cares for the glorious painting right above our head. The limitless sky, its brilliant stars and moon, the splendid hues at the hour of sunrise and sunset—can any artist paint all these? We do not, however, raise our vision but look lower and lower. That is why we are captivated by trivial paintings. This is a pitiable situation. It is very likely that, in the same manner, you may not have realized the significance of the prayer you have heard and the vow that was administered to you by the registrar. You should continuously ponder over them and try to fulfil the pledge. The noble *mantras* of the prayer convey a sustaining message which cannot be imparted by speeches and writings. It is natural sustenance like mother's milk. What will be the result if a mother withholds her milk from a new-born child and another woman offers him a lot of other dainties? The child will not survive. This commonplace food is like nectar. If we ponder over our ancient heritage, if we imprint it on our hearts and act in accordance with it, our life's mission would be fulfilled. You may think no more of my speech and all other things, but do not forget the prayer and the vow. Then your time and mine would not have been wasted.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 18-1-1925

432. *TELEGRAM TO SURENDRANATH BISWAS*[1]

[On or before *January 15, 1925*]

AM ANXIOUS TO ATTEND CONFERENCE. PLEASE REMIND ME END FEBRUARY.

GANDHI

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16-1-1925

[1] Chairman, Reception Committee, Bengal Provincial Conference. The Conference was to be held at Faridpur.

433. CONFESSION OF FAITH

It gives me much comfort to be able to have this unsolicited declaration[1] from Rajagopalachari. The reader knows my regard for his sanity and judgment. And I was grieved whilst he was torn with doubts and fears. There is no "playing with truth" in the charkha programme, for satyagraha is not predominantly civil disobedience but a quiet and irresistible pursuit of Truth. On rarest occasions it becomes civil disobedience. But conscious and willing obedience must, in the case of a large body of workers, precede it. The charkha which is the embodiment of willing obedience and calm persistence must therefore succeed before there is civil disobedience. It is because I am much afraid of playing with truth in even thinking of civil disobedience before the necessary atmosphere has been ensured that I must insist upon the charkha and upon full surrender to the Swarajists, and for that matter to all concerned, even though the workers may be reduced to the number of the digits on the fingers of one hand only. We must not have violent disobedience under cover of civil disobedience. The lesson of Chauri Chaura has sunk too deep in me to be easily obliterated. Not only is there no trace of regret in me for the Bardoli decision but I hold it to be one of the greatest among my services to the country.

Young India, 15-1-1925

434. A NOTICE?

The following notice was delivered to me at Belgaum :

> We, the undersigned, delegates of the Kolaba District Congress Committee in the Maharashtra Province, beg leave to direct your attention to the special circumstances of our district. The Kolaba district is not a cotton-producing district, nor is it near such a cotton centre. The people of the district, therefore, naturally have no inclination towards spinning. Even in the first year of the non-co-operation movement, it was only with great difficulty that a few charkhas could be introduced which, too, span for only some months.

[1] *Vide* Appendix II.

> The Kolaba District Congress Committee has, therefore, after full consideration of these facts, passed a resolution in September last, to the effect that this spinning franchise cannot work in this district and its introduction in the Congress Constitution would endanger the very existence of almost all the committees in the district. We, therefore, inform you at the earliest opportunity after the spinning franchise is adopted by the Congress, that, though several of us have either voted for the resolution in the Congress or have refrained from voting against it only because the Swarajya party had decided to treat it as a party question, and others because they thought it inevitable to do so for the sake of unity in the Congress, it is difficult for us to carry it out in practice, so that you may not afterwards have any occasion for disappointment.

It is dated 27th December and signed by twelve members including the President and the Secretary. I hope that the signatories do not propose to carry their threat into effect. If these gentlemen have voted for, or refrained from voting against, the spinning resolution for the sake of discipline or unity, I beg to point out to them that the mere voting or refraining does not fulfil the conditions of discipline or unity. To be effective, discipline means the carrying into effect of the terms of the resolution in a proper soldierly spirit of obedience although it may not commend itself to reason. Such was the spirit of the Light Brigade whose memorable charge has been made famous by Tennyson. Such was also the spirit of the soldiers who, although they knew they were running into the jaws of death, followed their general during the Boer war and were riddled to death by the Boer bullets on the heights of Spionkop. A mechanical assent by them to their general's proposition that the heights should be carried would have meant nothing, and would have meant even disgrace. It was the action though reluctant yet as daring as that of the staunchest believers that made them heroes. Be it noted that they fought a battle in which defeat was a certainty. But heroes are made in the hour of defeat. Success is, therefore, well described as a series of glorious defeats. What if the franchise is found at the end of the year to have produced a failure? It will be a glorious defeat if the Congressmen irrespective of parties and irrespective of willingness or unwillingness will work their best to make it a success.

Nor is it proper to say as the signatories have said that many have voted for the resolution for the sake of unity if they have not intended to work in accordance with the resolution. Unity is made of sterner stuff. It is not "a showy nothing" to be merely

named on a paper resolution. Unity to be achieved means solid action in terms of the resolution. I do not believe in the Councils. But because my co-workers believe in it, I have given them the use of the Congress name. Now if my heart does not co-operate with my lip or my pen, I am a hypocrite and not a believer in unity. Having voted for the resolution that authorizes Council-entry, I must wish well to the Swarajists. I must in no way hamper their progress by any act of mine; I must even help them wherever I can to the best of my ability and if they fail, they should not be able to say that they have failed because I refused to help within the limits previously and mutually understood. Assuming that the No-changers do not in any way whatsoever hamper the Swarajists, even the latter's failure, if there is to be failure, will be a success because at the end of it we shall have found another way of compassing our end. Exactly similarly, if all parties have done their best to make the franchise a success and it fails, we shall all realize the fact frankly, accept the defeat and jointly set about cutting another road to success. For out of our defeats, if we are determined, we shall find the way that leads us to our goal.

And what is the difficulty these Kolaba friends find except that of their own creation? If there is no cotton grown in their district let them buy it. Kolaba is nearer Bombay than Manchester. Will they be surprised to learn that not a pod of cotton grows anywhere near Manchester and the gentlemen there find no difficulty in importing and carding and spinning it? I assure the friends of the Kolaba district that they will not find it half as difficult as the citizens of Manchester to import cotton in their district. Let me further hearten them by telling them that if they have not the will to import cotton and organize carding and spinning, the Congress resolution permits them to buy hand-spun yarn and pay the required quantity to the Congress. Have they the will to buy yarn? It will still be well, provided that the yarn *is* hand-spun and is even and well-twisted.

Young India, 15-1-1925

435. WELL DONE

Deshbandhu's latest score against Lord Lytton is a brilliant stroke. His ailing condition and his being carried to the Council Hall on a stretcher adds a dramatic touch to the great victory. His mere presence in an ailing condition constituted a speech far more effective than any spoken word. If Lord Lytton has sufficient imagination and enough of the sportsman in him, he should after all these repulses withdraw the ordinance, release the prisoners and throw the responsibility on those who voted with the Deshbandhu of dealing with the conspiracy for murder which His Excellency believes exists in Bengal. He must not complain of the conduct of the majority in the Bengal Council because they have voted against him. The essence of popular legislatures is that the Government that is responsible to them must depend for its existence upon their reasoned support. They may be obstinate, stupid or suspicious on occasions. The Government has then to wait patiently for their conversion and be prepared to run risks of misgovernment or even worse. Why should a popular assembly be expected to be free from the limitations of an autocrat? Lord Lytton does not claim for his measure capacity for securing absolute immunity from political crime. But I very much fear that all the cogent argument that is being advanced by Indian publicists, although it is almost unanimous in its condemnation of Lord Lytton's policy, will be lost upon a Government which has become habituated to treat public opinion with contempt. Hence it is that I say to the public men of India that if they will add force to their argument, they must ply the charkha. It is the only creative energy that is readily available to the nation. The discipline that Deshbandhu Das has brought about in the Bengal Council will act with telling effect as soon as but no soo er than the charkha has obtained a footing in every home and boycott of foreign cloth has thereby become an accomplished fact. Oh, for one concrete act to the credit of the nation as a whole!

Young India, 15-1-1925

436. KATHIAWAR NOTES

It was no light thing for me to advise the Kathiawar Political Conference not to pass a string of resolutions on grievances of which the delegates had no method of enforcing redress even if they were capable of proof to the satisfaction of the public. I told them that the Conference should first develop a spirit of public service and sacrifice and then organize for redress of grievances. They would then be better able to deal with the various matters about which they felt and complained. This was the method of pacific resistance. The Subjects Committee had no hesitation in accepting this advice. But there was an interesting debate on the spinning franchise on which the organizers had prepared a resolution. It was however carried by an overwhelming majority. This resolution differs from the Congress resolution in that it requires the original member habitually to wear khadi and not merely on state occasions. Here there was no disciplinary voting; everyone was free to vote as he chose.

It now remains to be seen how the resolution works. Everyone seemed to admit that the success would depend largely upon the zeal, earnestness and capacity of the principal workers who made themselves responsible for the resolution.

Sir Prabhashanker to Spin

The most startling event of the session perhaps was the solemn resolution taken by Sir Prabhashanker Pattani to spin daily for at least half an hour before taking his principal meal so long as he was not too ill to turn the wheel. He has made no exception for travels, for he contends, and rightly, that as he travels always first class, he should have no difficulty about carrying the wheel with him and spinning during his travels. It is a tremendous step for Sir Prabhashanker. I hope that he will be able to carry out his resolution. His example must give great encouragement to the hand-spinning movement in Kathiawar. Needless to say that Sir Prabhashanker is not expected to join the Kathiawar Sabha. I was anxious to make it clear that though spinning has its political aspect, every spinner need not concern himself with it. It was enough for me if Princes and their ministers spun to set an example and as a token of their identification with those they ruled. The peasantry of Kathiawar has ample leisure. The people are poor. And if the fashion of spinning is set by the ruling class and their

ambassadors the people will adopt it and make a substantial addition to the national wealth. The effect of the addition on individuals might be imperceptible, but on the people as a whole it must be most marked.

The reader will be interested to know how Sir Prabhashanker came to take the resolution. He attended the Subjects Committee by invitation as a visitor. After the Spinning Resolution was adopted I invited the members to enrol themselves as spinners. I told them that at Belgaum I had undertaken in common with others to enlist before the 1st of March at least 100 members who would undertake to spin 2,000 yards per month. I added, too, that I would have also two spinners from among the "unwilling" class. I told the audience that I had hope of Kathiawar giving me the 100 members and that among the two unwilling spinners I had Sir Prabhashanker in mind when I gave the undertaking at Belgaum. Up jumped to his feet Sir Prabhashanker and in solemn tones announced the foregoing resolution amid cheers.

I was to be Sir Prabhashanker's teacher. At the time of writing he had only three lessons. On the third day he was able to spin within less than two hours forty-eight yards of even, well-twisted yarn of eight counts. As a matter of fact during the very first lesson lasting half an hour he was able to draw a thread. He then asked to be left alone to battle with the wheel. Let me hope that the other administrators and ministers will copy Sir Prabhashanker's noble resolve to the benefit of themselves and the people under their charge.

Cotton Collection

Bhavnagar being a cotton centre it was decided also to collect cotton for distribution among those poor spinners who might be disposed to give half [an] hour's labour but may not be able to give or beg cotton. As a result, over 275 maunds of cotton was collected—not a bad result of two days' begging. If the enthusiasm continues, the spinning organization must prosper in Kathiawar.

Young India, 15-1-1925

437. *THE REVOLVING WHEEL*

Baro Dada Dwijendranath Tagore as the reader knows has a weakness for me. Almost everything I say or do appeals to him with an irresistible force. The reader is therefore entitled to discount his approval of my ideas and schemes. But he cannot but admire Baro Dada's zeal and devotion for his country which make him keep in touch with the current thought in our politics. Here is his latest on the spinning-wheel:

> In practice, though not in theory, most self-important people fondly believe that what seems improbable to them is impossible and what seems probable to them is alone possible. The enemies of Napoleon once thought that it was as impossible for an army to cross the Alps during the winter season as it would be to take a flight to the moon by means of a balloon; but Napoleon thought otherwise. To his penetrating view, crossing the Alps was the only means possible by which he could gain entrance into Italy.
>
> In like manner most of our countrymen think it utterly impossible that the cause of our economical, if not political, freedom can advance a single step by such a simple thing as plying the charkha; while on the other hand Mahatmaji thinks that that is the only means possible by adopting which we can hope to reach the goal of our endeavour.

Baro Dada adds in a footnote that a charkha is philologically equivalent to a circle and metaphorically to the revolving wheel of the universe—*samsara*. One of Kabir's songs is based on this imagery. But the most important part of Baro Dada's letter is his emphasis on the stern fact that howsoever impossible the charkha may appear to the worldly-wise, it is the only possible thing for the country's real advance. It is the only thing that can give substance to any big political move that the country may make.

Young India, 15-1-1925

438. NON-BRAHMINS

The *Chronicle* invites me to explain my action or inaction in connection with the Non-Brahmin Conference at Belgaum. It surprises me to hear complaints of indifference on the part of the Congress leaders regarding the Conference. Speaking for myself I was trying to attend all the conferences consistently with the work I had gone to Belgaum to do. The Non-Brahmin Conference that was held was not held, so I was told, in response to Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation. It was not held on the Congress ground. It was not held in consultation with any Congressman so far as I am aware. I knew nothing of the time or the place of the meeting except through the admission card that was delivered to me in common with numerous such cards. Nevertheless I was anxious to attend it and was trying to fit in my visit there with my other appointments. Unfortunately I was attending to business. I could not leave, whilst the Conference was proceeding. When I finished my work and inquired I found that the Conference was already dissolved. I state these facts merely to show that there was neither disinclination nor discourtesy shown regarding the Conference. What applies to me applies to most leaders. In my opinion it was the duty of the organizers to consult me as to the time of the Conference so as to ensure my attendance. And I would then have made it possible for the other Congress leaders, too, to go. Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation was not meant for a mechanical act of holding other conferences during the Congress week. It was to bring the parties together in hearty contact. I find no fault with the organizers of the Non-Brahmin Conference; I am simply endeavouring to show that the Congress leaders would have gladly gone if they could have and if they had been given an opportunity. Since writing the foregoing I have seen Sjt. Gangadharrao's explanation which makes the position clearer.

Young India, 15-1-1925

439. *DETAILS FOR WORKING THE NEW FRANCHISE*

I give below a summary of the instructions for Congress Committees and workers prepared at my request by Sjt. Satis Das Gupta of the Khadi Pratishthan. They may serve as a model for the Congress Committees.

In order to conduct the work of storing and despatching yarn quotas received from the members, the taluka or other enrolling committees shall have to keep a set of books: (1) Member Roll; (2) Receipt Book for yarn; (3) Yarn Register for members.

Member Roll: For a new member, after the creed is signed, and for an old member, on receipt of the first yarn quota, the name of the member should be registered in the Member Roll.

MEMBER ROLL 1925

Taluka		District											Province
		Yarn Quota Received											
Serial No.	Name & Address	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1.	J. F. Iyer	A	A	A									
2.	K. R. Nathan	B	B	B									

In the Member Roll serial number of the member and his name and address should be written. Against his name entry will be made of the class of his yarn quota. It is necessary to classify the members in order to know how the franchise works.

Classification of members: Class 'A'—those who spin personally; Class 'B'—those who obtain the yarn otherwise.

Receipts: The collector who receives yarn shall give a receipt to the member in the following form:

YARN RECEIPTS

Date	Receipt No.	C.C.
Received from		
Roll		
Class		
Cotton supplied (*tolas*)		
Hanks of yarn said to be . . . yds.		
Counts		Signature of Collector

The receipts should be printed in triplicate; the first copy is to be kept by the Collecting Office, the second copy is to be sent to the Taluka Office, third copy is to be given to the member. The same form should be used whether the collector goes to the houses of the members or the members deposit the yarn in the Congress Office. If cotton is given in exchange the quantity given should be entered in the receipt.

The collector should attach a label to the yarn bearing the roll number and the name of the members and some other details as shown below. The label is to be of strong paper double folded and pasted with a thread passing through or in any other suitable manner and tied to the bundle of yarn.

LABEL

Roll No.	Name		Class
. . . Yds.	Quota for		
	. . . C. C.		
		Collector	Date

The collector shall deposit the yarn in the office of the Taluka Congress Committee.

It is assumed that the village or other committee subordinate to the taluka receives the Receipt Book only from the taluka and all the books are kept in the Taluka Office. Such subordinate committees as may be willing to keep other books may do so in order to better manage their affairs.

Receipt Books shall be printed by the Provincial Office and numbered in one series, the number of receipts required being 12 for each member for the year.

The Receipt Books shall be supplied by P.C.Cs. on application. The P.C.C. shall keep a register of all such issues in the following form:

REGISTER OF RECEIPT BOOKS

Date	Name of C.C. and District	Name of officer to whom sent	Box No.	Receipt Number	
				From	To

Yarn collected should be sent by the receiving committees direct to the P.C.C. or to such other office as the P.C.C. may direct for this purpose.

No yarn once received as franchise quota should be used for the same purpose again. The P.C.Cs. shall have a Day Book for entering yarn received and issued and for showing the balance yarn in hand.

YARN DISPOSAL DAY BOOK

Province Year

Date	Yarn received from	Quantity			Issued to	Quantity			Balance		
		Md.	Sr.	Tola		Md.	Sr.	Tola	Md.	Sr.	Tola
5-2-	Haripur T.C.C. for Madhubani V.C.C.	...	10	5							
15-2-					P.K.B. for weaving	...	8	...	...	2	...

VALUATION

The P.C.C. shall valuate the yarn quota received during each month and send 10 per cent thereof to the A.I.C.C.

The P.C.C. shall send a monthly return containing the list of members in the following form to the A.I.C.C.

MONTHLY RETURN OF MEMBERS

Province Month

District	Congress Committee	No. of members on the roll	No. of members who sent quota	
			Class A	Class B

The P.C.C. shall keep an account with each Congress Committee sending yarn, so that at any time it may be ascertained how much out of the sale proceeds of yarn may be due as against the liabilities for cotton supplies to the Committee.

The yarn on arrival should be valuated and put wholly to the credit of the C.C. in the first instance. Periodically sums due to the P.C.C. for A.I.C.C., P.C.C. and D.C.C. shares of the yarn values should be ascertained and debited to the account of the Congress Committee concerned.

ACCOUNT FORM FOR P. C. C.

A/c . . . Taluka Congress Committee Year

Date	Cotton supplied	Dr.			Date	Yarn received	Cr.		
10-1-	½ Md. @ Rs. 40/- per B. Md.	20	-	-	5-2-	10 Sr. 5 Tolas @ Rs. 2/- per seer	20	2	-
20-1-	1 Md. @ Rs. 40	40	-	-		20 Seers @ Rs. 2-4 per seer	45	-	-
10-3-	25/ of Jan., Feb. and March quota	16	4	6					

If an account as shown above is kept with regard to all Congress Committees and the A.I.C.C. it would be easy to satisfy all parties. The P.C.C. supplies cotton on account and realizes the value of yarn and has to apportion the A.I.C.C. share and the share of the other bodies in the value. It is by itself a complicated work and if proper accounts are not kept the risks of failure would be great.

SPINNING OPERATIONS

In those provinces in which there are a considerable number of self-spinners and the khadi activity is of importance, it will not be difficult to enrol members on yarn franchise at once and work the existing charkhas. But in those provinces where spinning has not made much headway the P.C.C. will have to make very special arrangements for enrolling members.

Up to now the Congress Committees were handling cash only, but with the introduction of the yarn franchise, yarn and khadi will have to be handled. The Congress office shall have a yarn and khadi section. Scales and weights for weighment and all the necessary items for the storing, packing, despatch and sale of khadi and yarn will have to be attended to. A full set of books shall have to be kept. Every Congress office will necessarily become a sort of khadi production centre.

Arrangements shall have to be made for making charkhas easily available to the members.

Every Congress Committee will require a training section to be attached with it. The worker in charge of spinning section must learn to card and use the carding-bow as an expert and also be a good spinner.

Young India, 15-1-1925

440. SPEECH AT CULTIVATORS' CONFERENCE, PETLAD

January 15, 1925

I would consider this Conference futile if the president[1] cannot be given the alms he is begging for. There need be no reproach if he demanded something excessive and beyond your capacity. It would be a matter of shame for you, as well as for me, if forty volunteers are not recruited from this Conference. This would be so because of my close association with *Patidars*—it does not date from the time I started my work here but from the time when I was in South Africa—and on the strength of that association I expect that forty volunteers should be readily available from such a gathering. Not only men but women volunteers too should be available. If the latter do not have a place in this movement, we shall be able to achieve only half of what we wish to. In a way it is true that these volunteers are honorary workers. They accept payment not because they covet it. However, the public which wishes to avail itself of their services is under obligation to make arrangements for their livelihood. Forty workers are not enough for our purposes. In India we may need even four hundred thousand volunteers. We do indeed need five to seven thousand workers for the task that we have undertaken and, in this poor country, it is impossible that so many volunteers can work in an honorary capacity. Even in European countries it is not possible to get such people. God has not created us merely to eat and remain idle. We have violated the universal law of nature—if a man eats without working for his food and spends thousands of rupees, thousands will die of starvation. The British historian Hunter writing of India says that one hundred million people get barely one meal a day and, that too, of *roti* and salt. The Congress too has passed a resolution that we should not expect all volunteers to be honorary workers. In order to set an example the leaders should make a beginning. I too should, if necessary, accept an allowance. So should Vallabhbhai. Of course, I get many things from friends. Perhaps, today Vallabhbhai and I do not need an allowance; however, if such an occasion arises, both of us will get ourselves recruited as paid volunteers. Take the example of Tilak Maharaj and Gokhaleji. When

[1] Dr. Sumant Mehta

the Fergusson College was founded, both of them had pledged themselves to serve the cause of education, content with a meagre salary of Rs. 30/-. Later on Tilak Maharaj gave this up for certain reasons but, so long as he was there, he considered it an honour to accept this sum. Gokhaleji, on his part, completed twenty years; he was a member of the Legislative Assembly, he served on many committees, he received some money from this, but he had not ceased to take the salary that he received from the Fergusson College. Even when he became "great" and when he was in a position to get a salary of Rs. 10,000, he did not regard the large amounts with the same respect that he gave to his original salary of Rs. 75/-. He had also very respectfully accepted a small sum by way of pension.

It is not for volunteers to pay heed to public criticism. Those who have nothing to do can do a lot of harm, hence volunteers should not fear criticism coming from such individuals. Volunteers should regard criticism as the food on which they live. One who cannot stand being criticized by the world cannot become a volunteer. They should be thick-skinned like buffaloes. A volunteer should be a yogi who would keep on working with bowed head, look neither forward nor backward and attend only to himself and his work. The volunteer who holds that he has placed himself at the disposal of the public would think day and night only of his work; however, he should not hesitate to accept an allowance—not *kheer* and *puri*[1] but *jawar* and *bajra*[2]. Those volunteers who have tried and got used to simple food should get themselves recruited and remove the president's fear. Come forward if you wish to detain the president here. You may never get another president who will be satisfied with so little.

I must necessarily tell you about the mighty and momentous activity in India today—that of khadi, that of the spinning-wheel; as people keep opposing it, my faith in it gets ever stronger. Do not therefore think that I am stupid and stubborn and stick to a thing unintelligently. This object, of which I am speaking, I placed before India only four or five years ago, but I had put forward my arguments in its favour in *Hind Swaraj* before ever having set eyes on the spinning-wheel. Moreover, I find that the opposition to it is not based on experience or thought, whereas my arguments are based on an abundance of both. I regard myself as a straightforward person. I regard it my dharma to admit my

[1] Rich food
[2] Simple food

own mistakes. I do not approve of filth. To bear filth on the body, in the mind or in the heart is a disease, hence not to admit a mistake is also a disease. He who does not admit his mistakes before God—although He is omniscient, He makes man strive and often deludes him—one who does not admit one's mistakes before God, that is, before the world, will fall a prey to consumption, will invite spiritual decay. This is even more harmful than consumption which is only physical. Only the body is wasted in one, while in the other the spirit seems to be destroyed. The spirit is immortal, indestructible; hence, even though there is an illusion of its destruction it is not really destroyed. In imagining the destruction of the soul which is immortal, one is stricken by a double disease. Hence I would not hesitate in the least to admit a mistake if I made one. It does not matter if, as a result of this, all spinning-wheels stop working and I am branded insane; but, then, I know that such a situation has not arisen. I have such faith in the spinning-wheel that even if my wife, my sons and my colleagues who are even closer to me than my sons gave it up, I would all alone keep singing its praises and plying it. Idleness is the great plague of India. It is not a natural tendency. It could not be so for the peasant for, if that was the case, his fields would be ruined. In our country, idleness crept in with the ruin of the spinning-wheel. Crores of people became unemployed and to them employment cannot be merely an amusement. Some say that they will make baskets, others that they will make locks. Some wish to make matches and others soap. These jobs cannot be taken up by the millions and, even if theset hings were produced by the millions, they would find no market. If we work in this manner there could be no national unity but rather a crowd of individuals. Such work cannot uplift us. It is for this very reason that I claim that what we need in India is a supplementary occupation. There are hardly any villages in Kheda which I have not visited and very few persons there whom I have not met. Most of these have plenty of spare time. If I proclaim that the spinning-wheel is the means of utilizing that time, it is not met with general approval. The result is, some resort to theft, others incur debts and yet some others starve. People who are in such a pitiable plight, who are forced to remain idle, are bound to be ruined. If they do not rouse themselves and rouse others too, they will certainly be ruined. This is a law of social existence. It is not a law which governs individuals but one which is true of society. Crores of persons cannot make a livelihood by the spinning-wheel nor has it been introduced as a source of livelihood, but it

may be described as *annapoorna,* which indicates ghee and milk. Countless numbers of the poor cannot afford ghee or milk, they cannot afford a drop of milk or a particle of ghee for their wheat gruel. This situation is dreadful. The only remedy for it is the spinning-wheel. One person putting in labour worth a rupee makes no difference, but a town with a population of seven thousand earning seven thousand rupees in this manner does make a difference. By working the spinning-wheel, some other virtues are automatically acquired. It is accompanied by simplicity, sincerity and regularity; and regularity in one matter leads to regularity in one's entire life, just as, if one angle of a crooked square is set right, the other angles automatically resume their shape. This is a law of geometry. When one bit of work is done regularly, all others become regular. You will remember me too late if you do not take to the spinning-wheel today. As soon as there has been only a small downpour, you should raise the bunds and hold the water. He who tries to do so when the water pours down in torrents cannot stop it and consequently faces the loss of water as well as the bunds. Now, while there is still time, I would ask you to be on your guard and wake up. Do not like a miserly bania calculate what you can get from the spinning-wheel, but think rather of the gain it will bring the nation. In a small village of the size of Trapaj, people were astonished when the figures were explained to them. Kathiawar is not a fertile region. Sticks and stones are all that grow there. Moreover, as the land is unproductive, people sit around the village square and chat idly not for six but eight months in the year while some would perhaps even take opium. I explained to the people of Trapaj how they could easily save two thousand rupees. The larger part of the expense on a seer of cotton consists of spinning, not weaving. If you use your own cotton, clean it and spin it at home, the only expense would be that of having it woven. And if this is all the cost that has to be incurred, we could compete with the textile mills of the world. For textile mills have themselves to incur almost the same cost on weaving as do handlooms. The people of India understood this and hence they were as accomplished in the use of the spinning-wheel as in cooking; with the disappearance of the wheel we came to lead unholy and godless lives and ceased to fear God. If you wish to have faith in God, to become pious, to protect your sisters' honour, then adopt the spinning-wheel. In its wake will follow the awakening of the country, the unity of Hindus and Muslims, the end of the country's poverty and the salvation

of all the peasants of India. The entire social structure of India is based on the spinning-wheel.

I have heard that you *Patidars* do not treat the untouchables properly. If you look upon yourselves as Kshatriyas, you are not entitled to use force against the untouchables, to browbeat them, to practise the barbaric law of buying much labour for a small payment. The *Gita* asks you to keep the gods pleased: "The gods will give you rain, if you keep them pleased". The gods are not in heaven. For you, they are among the untouchables; they belong to the labouring class. The poverty-stricken people of India are her gods. Religion without compassion is a fraud. Compassion is at the very root of religion and one who forsakes it, forsakes God; one who forsakes the poor forsakes everything. If we do not look after the poor and the untouchables, we are sure to perish.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 25-1-1925

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

M. N. ROY ON BOLSHEVISM

Some of his American friends wrote Mahatma Gandhi that, in the name of religion, he was probably introducing Bolshevism into India. These gratuitous "friends", obviously taking their cue from the spokesmen of Anglo-Saxon Imperialism (who often masquerade as pacifists), depict the revolt of the Moslem peoples as a menace to the world, because this revolt is supported by Bolshevik Russia. It should have been very simple for Mahatmaji to give a fitting reply to this impudent communication. He could have told his "responsible (?) foreign friends" that the Moslem peoples have legitimate reason to revolt, and that any political doctrine or government supporting this revolt is to be considered favourably by all apostles of freedom. Besides, he could have requested his American friends to get busy at home, if they sincerely dreaded any menace to the world. What is menacing the world more today than American Imperialism? Is the revolt of the Moslem people more sinister than the Ku-Klux-Klan and the American Legion? Is Bolshevist atheism more godless than the anti-Asiatic spirit of the American democracy?

The Mahatma, however, did not give such a direct answer. He preferred to justify himself—to absolve himself from any possible suspicion of Bolshevist tendency. But the curious thing is, that although by his own confession he did not know anything about Bolshevism, nevertheless he was extremely solicitous to disown any leaning towards it, so sure is his instinctive antipathy for it. In an article in *Young India* he writes: "In the first place I must confess that I do not know the meaning of Bolshevism." This is indeed a very damaging confession, in view of the fact that it is made by one standing at the head of a great popular movement. The Mahatma said in the same article, that he knew that there were two opposite pictures of Bolshevism, "one painting it in the blackest colour, the other hailing it as a deliverance for the downtrodden masses all the world over." But he does not know what to believe. Here again he could follow a simple human course. He could easily find out who paints the first picture. It is done by those who are ruling over the world with the policy of blood and iron. In deference to his scruples of impartiality, he might not believe those giving the second picture; but certainly Mahatmaji does not need to be convinced that the first party is not the friend or deliverer of the human race. Therefore when they depict a thing in the blackest colour, the oppressed section of humanity can instinctively sense some sinister motive, they feel that the "blackest colour" is for deceiving them. By this unerring instinct, Indian nationalists during the War used to read two German victories in the

place of each allied victory cabled by Reuter, and the Mexican peon calls himself proudly a Bolshevik, for the simple reason that the American capitalists are so much against Bolshevism. But I suppose, the mentality of a Mahatma is too complicated an organism to admit of such a simple instinctive process.

Since the deplorable ignorance of Bolshevism is not the Mahatma's alone, but is shared by many in India, and since this ignorance does not preclude them from forming an opinion on the subject, it may not be uncalled for to say a few words about this "monstrous" doctrine. It is the more called for, in view of the fact that Bolshevism (which, by the way, is not the result, as is commonly believed, but the basic principle of the Russian Revolution of 1917) is the most dominant political factor of the contemporary world. Just as the great French Revolution of 1789 affected the political thought and life of Europe at that epoch, the Russian Revolution is bound to play the same role in our time, with the difference that the geographical situation of Russia, coupled with the principles of her revolution, will bring wider spheres, including Asia and Africa, under its sway. This is the case, despite the explicable apprehension and righteous indignation of the pacifically minded ladies and gentlemen, whose good faith is taken for granted by Mahatmaji, but is seriously doubted by more practical men of the world.

Now, as far as Mahatmaji is concerned, the main principles of Bolshevism will not be anything new. He himself will think so. But principles become a bundle of dead formulas if they are not put into action. By his own declaration, the Mahatma desires to see the masses freed from the domination of capitalism. Well, Bolshevism does not propose anything more monstrous. The Bolsheviks are generally in agreement with Mahatmaji when he says, "the greatest menace to the world today is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races." But the difference between Mahatmaji and the Bolsheviks is that in the hands of the former, this gospel of freedom loses all practical value, being subordinated to an intricate conception of morality, religion and God, while the latter do not permit their vision to be clouded by illusions, and deal with the world as it is. The result is, that while Bolshevism forges ahead, breaking one link after another of the mighty chain of time-honoured servitude, in the face of united and determined opposition of the powers that be, Gandhism gropes in the dark, spinning out ethical and religious dogmas, that only prevent the masses from developing the will to fight for freedom.

It can be taken for granted that Mahatmaji is acquainted with the general principles of Socialism; not the Utopian brand of St. Simon, Thomas More, Tolstoy, etc., but that formulated on the basis of scientific knowledge and economic facts by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The principles of Socialism are (1) to overthrow the capitalist system of production; (2) abolition of private property; (3) reorganization of the means of social production and

distribution on the basis of communal ownership and (4) transformation of the class-ridden society into a human fraternity. These are also the principles of Bolshevism, the latter being Socialism in its militant and initial stages of victory.

The term "Bolshevism", which has come to be associated with bloodshed, destruction, terror and what not, is very harmless in its meaning. It is derived from the Russian word *bolsheviki*, which is the synonym for the adherents of the majority. The term was first used when the Russian Socialist Democratic Labour Party split in 1903 into two factions on the questions of programme and tactics. The programme and tactics advocated by the majority, led by Lenin together with others, came to be known as Bolshevism; and since the Russian proletariat scored the victory in October 1917, having fought according to the programme and tactics advocated by the majority of the party ever since 1903, the October Revolution is called a Bolshevist victory, which means the first triumph of Socialism. What are the concrete results of the Russian Revolution? (1) A corrupt, irresponsible despotism was overthrown. (2) The bourgeoisie, which under the guise of democracy, sought in conjunction with foreign powers to deprive the Russian masses of the benefits of the Revolution, was also overthrown. (3) The landed aristocracy, the mainstay of the Czarist despotism, was destroyed, land declared to be the property of the entire nation and distributed among the cultivators. (4) Large industries were nationalized. (5) Foreign trade made a State monopoly. (6) All legislative and administrative power was transferred to the overwhelming majority of the people, namely, the workers, peasants and soldiers, who exercised this power through their councils (soviets). (7) All right of private property and the class privilege accruing therefrom was abolished. These in general are the principles of Bolshevism, applied practically in Russia in consequence of the Revolution. Now that he knows what Bolshevism is, what is the attitude of the Mahatma towards it? It will be interesting for India, as well as the whole world, to know the reply.

Now comes the thorny question. Mahatmaji might not take exception to these principles, but he would certainly make many a stipulation as to the method of realizing them. For him there is only one touch-stone for everything. If Bolshevism is atheistic, he is against it. That is all. Well, there we have given him a definition of Bolshevism in a nutshell. It is for him to pronounce whether it is a negation of God or what. He cannot maintain that it is a negation of God, unless he holds private property and vested interests to be a divine ordinance, because Bolshevism is certainly a negation of private property and vested interests, which from the dawn of civilization, have been the curse of human society. In the practical programme of Bolshevism there is no question of God or religion. It is neither theistic nor atheistic. It concerns the worldly life of man. The possible conflict with God and religion occurs only when the latter stands in the way; when the conception of God or religion clashes with this practical programme. In that case, Bolshevism does not hesitate to take up

the challenge even of the supposed Almighty, and become atheistic, thus running the risk of forfeiting the approbation of the Mahatma. But by doing so, it not only becomes the champion of the material rights of the masses, but holds up as well the torch of intellectual and spiritual emancipation to dissipate the gloom of ignorance and superstition in which the masses have been kept for ages by the dominating class.

The programme of Bolshevism, which Mahatmaji cannot deny to be humanitarian (unless he chooses to take up openly the cause of the upper class), is, however, not easily put into practice. The reign of terror and devastating civil war, that undeniably took place in Russia after the revolution, owe their origin to the fact that a brutal resistance was put up to prevent the realization of this programme. Not only the Russian aristocracy and bourgeoisie, who naturally frantically tried to regain their lost position, put up this resistance; they were openly backed by the international bourgeoisie, who saw in the Russian Revolution the first breach in their vital citadel. A part of this ceaseless campaign was the picturing of Bolshevism in the darkest colours, which did not altogether fail to impress even the Mahatma. Now what were the Bolsheviks to do in that situation? There were two alternatives: to call upon the Russian workers and peasants to be godfearing and meekly slip back into the bondage they had so heroically broken, or to keep on fighting even against God and religion, if they stood in the way, to protect and consolidate the freedom won. Bolshevism was obliged to accept the second alternative, because not only all available material forces were concentrated in order to force the Russian workers and peasants back under the capitalist and Czarist tyranny; all the arms of God and religion were also mobilized for the same purpose. Bolshevism is not a gospel of God: Bolshevists are not angels. But neither is Bolshevism the spirit of demons. The Mahatma proposes "to touch the masses through their hearts, their better nature". It is a fascinating proposition, to which Bolshevism would not object, had it been found workable in the practice of liberating the masses from class domination and imperialist oppression. His theory of "discipline" is also very questionable. It may be good for the spiritual well-being of the masses; but it certainly weakens their will to fight for freedom. All these doctrines about "heart", "better nature", "discipline" and the like have been adumbrated from time immemorial by those who were the (perhaps unconscious) instruments of class domination. Bolshevism does not shirk any task, however disagreeable or difficult it may be. It challenges the existence of God and denounces all the codes of religion and ethics originating therefrom because in the struggle for freedom they are all found arrayed on the side of despotism, tyranny and oppression.

Bolshevism is prepared to leave God alone, if He and His agents on earth agree not to meddle in things temporal. But if they do not agree to be satisfied with their super-material position and seek to make trouble on earth, Bolshevism

will preach atheism to liberate the masses from the snare of ignorance woven by religion.

M. N. ROY

Young India, 1-1-1925

APPENDIX II

EXTRACT FROM C. RAJAGOPALACHARI'S COMMENT ON CHARKHA

No-changers who feel that the salvation of the country, the permanent anchor of its hope, rests on the charkha, must not look up, on this side or that, but prayerfully carry the burden. There is no rest or fatigue for us. The wheel is our hope, our joy, our friend, our good angel. We must work for it in our waking hours, and dream about it when we sleep. I did not see fully the meaning of things at first. I therefore thought Mahatmaji went along paths where I saw no logic or light. But I now see things clearly, and hope all those who felt distracted by doubts like myself will also see. Spin, spin and spin and make others spin—this is our single *mantra*, our *Gayatri*.

While I saw all this, I felt at the same time that there was some sort of unreality, some sort of political playing with truth, casting a shadow over all this plan of satyagraha. But here I depend on the judgment of the guru whose instinctive sense of Truth is so much greater than mine, and I feel at ease.

C. R.

Young India, 15-1-1925

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CHRONOLOGY

(August 16, 1924 – January 15, 1925)

August 16 : Gandhiji left Ahmedabad for Delhi in connection with Hindu-Muslim settlement on communal riots.

August 17 : Reached Delhi.
In *Navajivan* appealed for contributions for flood relief in Malabar.

August 22 : Interview to Associated Press of India on negotiations for a compromise between Hindus and Muslims.
Gandhiji left Delhi for Ahmedabad *en route* to Bombay.

August 23 : In Ahmedabad spoke at a mass meeting of labourers.

August 26 : Spoke in reply to address presented by Ahmedabad Municipality.

August 28 : In *Young India* in "Gulbarga Gone Mad" appealed for Hindu-Muslim unity.

August 29 : Reached Bombay.
Spoke in reply to address presented by Bombay Municipal Corporation.

August 30 : In letter to Motilal Nehru explained the terms of his "full surrender" and proposed measures to improve Congress organization.
Participated in the birth anniversary celebrations of Dadabhai Naoroji organized by National Women's Council.

August 31 : In statement on unity explained his attitude of "perfect surrender" to Motilal Nehru.
At Excelsior Theatre addressed Parsi Rajakiya Mandal Meeting for Malabar Flood Relief.
At Bombay Provincial Congress Committee meeting replied to criticism of Spinning Resolution passed at Ahmedabad.

September 2 : Visited Khadi Bhandar at Princess Street.
In the evening gave away prizes at National Medical College.
At 9 p.m. spoke at meeting of Bombay Provincial Congress Committee.

September 3 : Left Bombay for Poona by night train.

September 4 : In Poona spoke at Public meeting.
Visited Servants of India Society.

Spoke at Tilak Mahavidyalaya Convocation.
Advised Congress workers to abdicate power and take up hand-spinning.

September 5 : Returned to Bombay *en route* to Ahmedabad.
Visited Surat and addressed mass meeting in the evening.

September 6 : In letter to Motilal Nehru emphasized decision not to divide the Congress.
In letter to Rajagopalachari stressed that "we must abdicate power altogether if we have faith in our mission".

September 9–10 : Riots in Kohat; Hindus were evacuated.

September 13 : Gandhiji left Ahmedabad for Delhi in connection with Hindu-Muslim riots.

September 14 : Reached Delhi.

September 15 : In Delhi inaugurated *The Hindustan Times.*

September 17 : Commenced 21-day fast at Mahomed Ali's house.

September 18 : In a statement released at 2 a.m. described 21-day fast as "penance and prayer".

September 24 : In statement to the Press on Unity Conference stressed need to evolve "heart-unity" and not just a "patched-up peace".

September 26 : Unity Conference in Delhi passed resolution requesting Gandhiji to give up fast.

September 27 : Gandhiji rejected Unity Conference appeal.

October 1 : Deputation of Bombay women met Gandhiji to persuade him to give up fast.
Gandhiji's tribute to Annie Besant on her 78th birthday was read out at a public meeting in Bombay.

Before *October 2 :* Gandhiji along with Rabindranath Tagore appealed to International Opium Conference, Geneva, to adopt measures for suppression of opium traffic except for medicinal purposes.

October 8 : In Delhi at 12 noon, broke his 21-day fast after making statement on Hindu-Muslim unity.
Mahomed Ali presented Gandhiji with a cow purchased from a butcher for being sent to *pinjrapole.*

October 9 : In message to the Press Gandhiji sought "prayer and co-operation of every son and daughter of India" in his endeavour for unity.

October 16 : In *Young India* reiterated necessity of Spinning Franchise.
In a letter sought Viceroy's permission to visit Kohat.

October 20 : In message asked Transvaal Indians to continue struggle for honourable existence.

October 23 : In *Young India* in "The Law of Love" asked No-changers to live "on the sufferance of their fellow-workers, the Swarajists and the Liberals".

October 28 : Viceroy refused permission to Gandhiji to visit Kohat.

October 30 : In message to U.P. Political Conference, Gorakhpur, Gandhiji condemned repression in Bengal and appealed to people to preserve peace.

November 2 : Left Delhi for Calcutta.

November 6 : In joint statement with Swaraj Party leaders announced agreement on concerted action, suspension of non-co-operation and Spinning Franchise.
Spoke in reply to Calcutta Corporation address at Town Hall.

November 7 : Explained during discussions with No-changers implications of agreement with Swaraj Party leaders.
Spoke in reply to Howrah Municipality address at Howrah Town Hall.
Interview to Associated Press of India on his agreement with Swaraj Party leaders.
Left for Delhi.

November 10 : In Delhi, interviewed by Associated Press of India, informed that Calcutta Agreement would be submitted to All-Party Conference, Bombay, for final decision.

November 13 : In *Young India* explained the Calcutta Agreement.
In letter informed Romain Rolland of the arrival of Madeleine Slade (Mirabehn) whom he would help "to become a little bridge between West and East".
Visited Modern School; addressed students at Ramjas College.
Attended funeral of Bi-Amma, mother of Ali Brothers.

November 14 : In a message to *World Tomorrow*, New York, described non-violence as the greatest living force.

November 16 : Issued statement on Kohat question.

Before *November 17* : In message to Tamilnad Conference, Tiruvannamalai, said the spirit of non-violence was basis of agreement with Swaraj Party leaders.

November 18 : Left Delhi for Bombay.

November 20 : Reached Bombay.

November 21 : Spoke at Congress Working Committee meeting, Bombay.
Moved the first resolution on Bengal Ordinance at All-Party Conference, Bombay.
In interview to Associated Press of India refuted reports in local newspapers about withdrawal of Spinning Franchise.

November 22 : Spoke on unity at All-Party Conference.

November 23 : At A.I.C.C. meeting moved resolution approving the Calcutta Agreement.
At Chowpatty spoke condoling Bi-Amma's death.

November 25 : Left Bombay for Ahmedabad.

November 26 : Reached Ahmedabad.

November 30 : In Ahmedabad, addressed students of Gujarat National College.

December 4 : Reached Lahore; conferred with Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya at the former's residence.

December 5 : Reached Amritsar.
In the afternoon spoke at a big diwan in Golden Temple.
In the evening, addressed public meeting at Jallianwala Bagh.

December 6 : At Punjab Provincial Khilafat Conference spoke in reply to Zafar Ali's attack on Hindu leaders.
In Lahore delivered Convocation address at Punjab Qaumi Vidyapith.

December 7 : Delivered presidential address at Punjab Provincial Conference.

December 8 : At Gandhiji's instance the representatives of the Khilafat Conference met at Lahore to evolve methods to strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity.

December 9 : In speech at Rawalpindi Gandhiji advised Hindu refugees not to return to Kohat on Government advice.

December 11 : Left Rawalpindi in the morning for Ahmedabad; at Lahore Railway Station *en route*, was interviewed by *The Tribune* on Kohat affairs.

December 13 : Reached Ahmedabad.

December 14 : In statement to the Press warned people not to believe unauthenticated reports of his Punjab speeches.

December 18 : Left Ahmedabad for Belgaum.

December 20 : Reached Belgaum.

December 21 : Spoke in reply to welcome address by the Belgaum Municipality and the District Board.

December 23 : In Belgaum, A.I.C.C. formed itself into Subjects Committee with Gandhiji as president and appointed a sub-committee with 16 members to draft resolution endorsing Calcutta Agreement.

December 24 : Subjects Committee adopted resolution endorsing Calcutta Agreement and Spinning Franchise.
Khilafat Conference was held in the Congress *pandal* under the presidentship of Dr. Kitchlew.

December 25 : In Belgaum at Subjects Committee meeting Gandhiji appealed to No-changers to have faith in Swarajists.

December 26 : The Indian National Congress began its 39th session under Gandhiji's presidentship. Gandhiji delivered the presidential address and spoke on the resolution endorsing Calcutta Agreement.

December 27 : Spoke at Fifth All-India Students' Conference in the morning.
At the Congress session spoke on various resolutions and on Annie Besant's statement.
The Congress session concluded with a moving address by Gandhiji first in Hindi and then in English.
Gandhiji Spoke at Untouchability Conference.
Attended Hindu Mahasabha session held in Congress *pandal*.

December 28 : Delivered the presidential address at Cow-protection Conference.

December 30 : Spoke at All-India States Conference.

December 31 : In Bombay at annual session of All-India Muslim League condemned Natal Boroughs Ordinance.

1925

January 1 : In *Young India* answered M. N. Roy's criticism of his article "Bolshevism or Discipline?".

January 2 : Spoke at Dohad and at Godhra.

January 8: In Bhavnagar delivered the presidential address at the Third Kathiawar Political Conference.

January 9 : The Kathiawar Political Conference concluded with a speech by Gandhiji.
At Samaldas College Gandhiji spoke on the duty of students.

January 14 : In Ahmedabad, spoke at Gujarat Provincial Conference meeting.
Delivered the convocation address at Gujarat Vidyapith.

January 15 : In *Young India* summarized instructions regarding working of Spinning Franchise.
At Sojitra spoke at Petlad District Cultivators' Conference.

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ERRATA

Page 67, *footnote* 2, *line* 3: *For* undue *read* Indu,
Page 269, *line* 16: *For* running *read* ruining.